DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 897 IR 019 846

TITLE	Only the Best: The Annual Guide to the Highest-Rated Educational Software and Multimedia. ASCD 1999-2000.
INSTITUTION	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA.
ISBN	ISBN-0-87120-364-2
ISSN	ISSN-1053-4326
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	150p.; Also available on CD-ROM.
AVAILABLE FROM	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1703 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311-1714 ($25 ASCD members; $29 nonmembers). Tel: 800-933-2723 (Toll Free); Tel: 703-578-9600; Fax: 703-575-5400. For full text: http://www.ascd.org.
PUB TYPE	Book/Product Reviews (072)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Computer Software; *Computer Software Evaluation; Computer Software Selection; Costs; Courseware; Educational Resources; *Educational Technology; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Materials; *Multimedia Materials; Reference Materials

ABSTRACT

"Only the Best" is an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) annual reference containing information on software programs and multimedia applications that have met stringent criteria for excellence. The purpose of this reference is to provide a quick and easy way for curriculum directors, technology coordinators, librarians, teachers, school administrators, students, and parents to find the highest-rated materials available. The book uses a two-column format. The left column contains information such as subject area and grade levels served, cost, and hardware requirements. The right column holds an in-depth description of the program as well as helpful tips from evaluators. Programs that cater to special needs students are highlighted in the right column. An Interdisciplinary Index is provided that allows users to locate programs appropriate for a specified subject area or across the curriculum. A software publisher directory and title index are also provided. This year's edition features 93 programs new to "Only the Best" as well as 16 "Classics." New to the 1999-2000 edition is the listing of Multiple Intelligences as a feature in each of the program descriptions, as well as the introduction of a "Multidisciplinary" category. The body of the reference consists of full-length program descriptions listed alphabetically by subject. A section on the evaluation process, list of highest-rated programs for 1999-2000, and "Only the Best" Classics are included. (AEF)

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THE ANNUAL GUIDE TO
THE HIGHEST-RATED
EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE
AND MULTIMEDIA

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1999–2000

THE ANNUAL GUIDE TO THE HIGHEST-RATED EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE AND MULTIMEDIA

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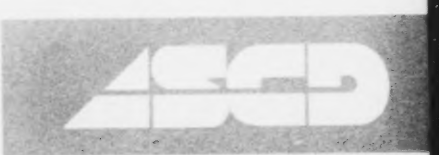

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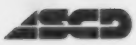

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1703 N. Beauregard St • Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1714, USA
Telephone: 800-933-2723 or 703-578-9600
Fax: 703-575-5400

Gene R. Carter, *Executive Director*
Michelle Terry, *Assistant Executive Director, Program Development*
Judy Walter, *Director, Program Development*
Jamie Sawatzky, *Project Manager and Editor, Only the Best*
Meltonya Booze, *Project Assistant*
Gary Bloom, *Director, Design and Production Services*
Karen Monaco, *Senior Designer*
Tracey A. Smith, *Production Manager*
John Franklin, *Production Coordinator*
Dina Murray, *Production Coordinator*
Christine Calorusso, *Manager, Editorial Services*
Mary Beth Nielsen, *Assistant Editor*

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Printed in the United States of America.

s9/99

ASCD Stock Number: 199212
ASCD Member Price: $25
Nonmember Price: $29

ISBN:0-87120-364-2
ISSN: 1053-4326

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Welcome V
What Is *Only The Best*? V
Notes for the *Only the Best* User V
Applications for Diverse Learners VI
What's New for *Only the Best* 1999–2000 VI
A Final Note VII

The Evaluation Process

The Evaluation Process VIII
What Are Our Evaluators Looking For? VIII
The Evaluators VIII

Highest-Rated Programs 1999–2000 XVIII

Full-Length Program Descriptions

Arts 1
Early Childhood 4
Foreign Language 8
Health 9
Language Arts 10
Mathematics 28
Multidisciplinary 40
Music 46
Problem Solving 48
Reference 51
Science 56
Social Studies 75
Student Helper 91
Tools 92
Typing 93

***Only the Best* Classics** 95
Software Publisher Directory 113
Interdisciplinary Index 118
Title Index 128

Introduction

Welcome to the 1999–2000 edition of *Only the Best: The Annual Guide to the Highest-Rated Educational Software and Multimedia*. This year's edition, the largest in five years, features 93 programs new to *Only the Best* as well as 16 *OTB Classics*— programs that have previously been listed in *Only the Best* and have now received enough favorable evaluations to make it into our version of the educational software and multimedia Hall of Fame.

What Is *Only the Best*?

Only the Best is an annual, easy-to-use reference containing information on software programs and multimedia applications that have met *Only the Best*'s stringent criteria for excellence (see the Evaluation Process section). The purpose of *Only the Best* is to provide a quick and easy way for curriculum directors, technology coordinators, librarians, teachers, school administrators, students, and parents to find the highest-rated materials available to meet their needs. By compiling information on the highest-rated materials in one convenient guide, educators are able to sift through the intimidating mass of programs now available and select those that are truly worthy of an *A* grade.

Only the Best, published annually since 1984, is also available on CD-ROM and via the Internet. The print editions of *Only the Best* feature the current year's entries, while *Only the Best 1990–99* on CD-ROM contains up-to-date information on the more than 500 titles that were included in all previous print editions. The 1990–99 CD-ROM edition is available through ASCD, 800-933-2723, ext. 2.

Only the Best is now featured prominently on ASCD's Web site <http://www.ascd.org>. In addition to finding the programs featured in the 1997 and 1998 editions of *Only the Best*, users will find tips on purchasing software for their schools or homes and an alphabetical listing of software publishers. These *Only the Best* resources can be found at the following Internet address:

<http://www.ascd.org/services/newotb/webpromo.html>

Notes for the *Only the Best* User

The two-column format of *Only the Best* makes it easy for readers to use the book for quick reference. The left column contains information such as subject areas and grade levels served, cost, and hardware requirements. The right column holds an in-depth description of the program as well as helpful tips from our evaluators.

Only the Best features an Interdisciplinary Index that allows users to locate programs appropriate for a specified subject area or across the curriculum. An example of the latter is Digital Production's *Meiko: A Story of Japanese Culture* (see page 83). As shown on the chart, this program can be used effectively in social studies, language arts, and foreign languages classrooms. The Interdisciplinary Index can be found on page118.

Applications for Diverse Learners

Only the Best also highlights programs that cater to special needs students. Such programs are indicated by an Applications for Diverse Learners section. This section can be found in the right column between the description and evaluator conclusions. The flexible design of *Only the Best* allows software and multimedia titles, traditionally listed under a special education heading, to be listed within their respective subject areas. To quickly locate titles with features especially appropriate for special needs students, look under "Diverse Learners" in the Interdisciplinary Index.

For more information on programs for diverse learners, contact the following organizations.

Alliance for Technology Access, 2175 East Francisco Blvd., Suite L, San Rafael, CA 94901. Phone: 415-455-4575. Internet Address: <http://www.ataccess.org/>

Closing the Gap: Computer Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation
Internet Address: <http://www.closingthegap.com/> (see the Resources Directory link)

ConnSENSE, 249 Glenbrook Road, U64, Storrs, CT 06269-2064. Phone: 860-486-5035. Internet Address: <http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~wwwpcse/CSBull.html>

Internet TESL Journal (monthly), <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/> (use the search function to find articles and software programs of relevance to ESL teachers and students)

Laureate Learning Systems, 110 East Spring Street, Winooski, VT 05404-1898. Phone: 800-562-6801. Internet Address: <http://www.llsys.com/>

Software To Go, Gallaudet University, MSSD Box 111, 800 Florida Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. Phone: 202-651-5705. Voice/tty: 202-651-5109. Internet Address: <http://pcnmpdb.gallaudet.edu/stg/index.html>

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Inc. (TESOL), 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-2751. Phone: 703-836-0774

What's New for *Only the Best 1999--2000?*

This year we are pleased to introduce the listing of Multiple Intelligences as a new feature in each of the *Only the Best* program descriptions. Introduced by Howard Gardner in his 1983 book, *Frames of Mind*, Multiple Intelligences theory debates the notion that humans have a single, fixed intelligence (as typically measured by Intelligence Quotient [IQ] tests). Gardner and others argue that we are blessed with a variety of skills and abilities that are developed through exposure to a variety of environments and learning experiences. Currently, Gardner has identified eight distinct intelligences (a ninth is being contemplated) that he feels should be considered when tying classroom activities to curriculum goals. For a lengthier description of Gardner's theory see the September 1997 issue of *Educational Leadership*,

which contains articles focused around the application of Multiple Intelligences in the classroom and also features an interview (http://www.ascd.org/pubs/el/sept97/gardnerc.html) with Gardner. Each of the programs detailed in this book helps to further develop one or more of the students' intelligences. The intelligences are listed as icons directly under the hardware requirements section of each program's description. Below are our graphical representations of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences used throughout the book:

Bodily-Kinesthetic—Ability to use your body, or parts of your body, to solve a problem, create something, or put on a production

Interpersonal—Capacity to understand, communicate, and relate to other people and groups

Intrapersonal—Understanding yourself and how you relate to your environment

Logical-Mathematical—Capacity to manipulate numbers or understand causal systems

Linguistic—Ability to use language, both oral and written, effectively

Musical—Capacity to think in musical terms, hear and recognize patterns, discriminate between sounds, and create music

Naturalist—Ability to discriminate among living things and to be in touch with your natural surroundings

Spatial—Ability to think in shapes and patterns

Also new to *Only the Best* this year is the introduction of a "Multidisciplinary"category. Some of the programs listed in *Only the Best* cannot be readily categorized into singular content areas such as social studies or mathematics because the content of the programs are too broad to fit into any one discipline. This category can be found starting on page 40.

A Final Note

We are always looking for evaluators to join us in our quest for identifying outstanding software and multimedia programs. If you are involved with a software evaluation group that might be interested in providing their findings to *Only the Best*, or would like to create an evaluation system within your district, please contact us at 800-933-2723, ext. 5674, or 703-575-5674.

We hope that you enjoy this year's edition of *Only the Best*.

Jamie Sawatzky
Editor, *Only the Best*
jsawatzk@ascd.org

The Evaluation Process

Throughout the year, approximately 25 evaluators in the United States and Canada forward the results of their ongoing software and multimedia evaluation efforts to ASCD. These evaluations are assigned a grade ("Excellent," "Good," or "Negative") and are entered into a database. A program is eligible for inclusion in *Only the Best* when it has received

- two "Excellent" grades OR one "Excellent" and three "Good" grades, and
- no "Negative" grades from any U.S. evaluator.

A program is eligible for "Classic" status when it has received two "Excellent" grades after publication in *Only the Best*.

What Are Our Evaluators Looking For?

Although our evaluators are often looking for many of the same features in a program, each evaluation group uses its own set of criteria. For example, Florida Department of Education evaluators address such factors as whether a software program meets state standards or builds on students' Multiple Intelligences. *Children's Software Revue* has established an evaluation instrument that helps the reviewer identify programs that are child controlled, have solid educational content, and contain rich design features such as multiple levels of difficulty and teacher options that are easy to find and use. Evaluators at the Developmental Software Awards include in their criteria such items as depth of graphics, level of interactivity, and age appropriateness of the program.

Most of the evaluators also try to measure the relative value of a program—that is, how much the program costs in comparison to what it can deliver to the user. Evaluators also keep an eye on whether a program meets its advertised objectives and whether a product is appropriate for classroom use.

Because each evaluation group has its own set of criteria and reviews programs appropriate for different classrooms and age groups, the reviews that we receive are varied in scope. *Only the Best* compiles the results of all of the different evaluations into one easy-to-use guide.

The Evaluators

Alberta Education

The Curriculum Standards Branch of Alberta Education (the Province's department of education) sets high standards for evaluating educational software and multimedia. A three-stage evaluation process is followed. Materials are first reviewed for curriculum fit. If found appropriate, the courseware is evaluated by specially trained independent teachers for instructional design and "tolerance and understanding" criteria. The teachers' conclusions are sent to the appropriate branch for a final judgment on quality and appropriateness to the curriculum and target audience.

In this edition of *Only the Best*, Alberta's ratings of basic, support, and authorized teaching materials are designated "Excellent."

For more information, contact Thérèse Pavone, Curriculum Standards Branch, Alberta Education, 11160 Jasper Ave., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 0L2. Phone: 780-422-3259. Fax: 780-422-0576.

American Library Association's "Best" List

Each year, three committees of the American Library Association's Association for Library Service to Children compile lists of notable films, videos, recordings, and microcomputer software. The microcomputer committee selects titles that challenge a student's imagination and intelligence through the effective use of technology. Titles appearing on this list are rated as "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

This list is presented annually in the April issue of *Booklist* and *School Library Journal*. For more information, contact the American Library Association at 800-545-2433, or visit their Web site at <http://www.ala.org>.

Binghamton (NY) City School District

Binghamton City School's database of educational software contains programs that have been evaluated by several of the district's most experienced technology users, kid-tested by qualified teachers, and given a subjective rating from 0 to 50. Programs receiving an average rating of 47–50 are designated with an "Excellent" rating by *Only the Best* and those with a rating of 43–46 are designated "Good."

For more information, contact Doug Green, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Binghamton City School District, 287 Prospect Street, Binghamton, NY 13905. Phone: 607-763-8442. E-mail: dgreen@stny.lrun.com.

Bologna New Media Prize

To recognize the growing significance of children's software, the Bologna Children's Book Fair, the world's leading children's publishing trade show, announced the 1999 Bologna New Media Prize, co-sponsored by *Children's Software Revue*, a U.S. publication dedicated to the evaluation of children's software. The Prize, awarded annually, was designed to encourage excellence and innovation in children's software.

A panel of seven leading reviewers of children's software from Europe, the United States, and Asia met in February 1999 in Bologna, Italy, to choose the New Media prize in 13 categories. Jurors had the following qualifications: an established track record as a software reviewer, the ability to offer impartial and objective opinions on a range of the latest children's software, and a background in education.

Titles included on the list of Bologna New Media Award Winners are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*. For more information about the Bologna New Media prize, visit their Web site at <http://www.bolognanewmediaprize.com> or contact the Bologna Fair's U.S. Representative, Consultants International Group by phone at 877-225-6462, or by fax at 202-393-4655.

Booklist: Editor's Choice Honors

Throughout the year, *Booklist* magazine includes reviews of educational software and multimedia. At the beginning of each year (January 15th), *Booklist*'s software and multimedia evaluators identify the Editors' Choice programs from the previous year. Since 1987, programs selected for this honor receive an "Excellent" rating in *Only the Best*.

Copies of the *Booklist* are available for $4.50 (U.S.) from the American Library Association, *Booklist*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Annual subscription: $65 in the United States and $80 in Canada.

For more information, contact Pat Foley with the American Library Association at 800-545-2433 Extension 5715, or visit their Web site at <http://www.ala.org/booklist/008.html>.

Book Report and *Library Talk* (Formerly *Technology Connection*)

The *Book Report* (6–12) and *Library Talk* (K–6) magazines now each include *Technology Connection* so that print and multimedia resources are integrated in one source. Software and multimedia reviews are written by school library media and technology specialists. Recommendations for programs are on three levels: Highly recommended—should be included in all collections; Recommended—should be seriously considered for purchase; and Optional Purchase—should be purchased only if useful to the collection or if funds are available. Programs that are highly recommended are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*, and those that are recommended are designated "Good."

Yearly subscriptions for these publications are available for $49 separately and $92 for both. Canadian orders add $16.00 per magazine. Contact Linworth Publishing, Inc., 480 East Wilson Bridge Road, Suite L, Worthington, OH 43085-2372. Phone: 800-786-5017. E-mail: newslin@aol.com.

California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse

For 15 years, the California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse has been identifying high quality instructional technology resources for grades K-12 in order to help teachers integrate multimedia products into their curriculums. Administered by the Stanislaus County Office of Education, the Clearinghouse evaluates CD-ROMs, diskettes, videos, and interactive videodisc products. All highly recommended programs have been evaluated by at least two K-12 educators from California schools. An exemplary grade from the CITC corresponds to an "Excellent" rating in *Only the Best*, and a desirable grade corresponds with a "Good" rating.

The CITC evaluations can be found on the Internet at <http://clearinghouse.k12.ca.us>. For more information, contact John Vaille, Executive Director, California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 801 County Center 3 Court, Modesto, CA 95354. Phone: 209-525-4979.

Children's Software Revue

Children's Software Revue, (CSR) issues a bimonthly magazine for parents and teachers of 3- to 12-year-olds that provides information on educational software for all hardware platforms.

Selected programs are submitted for review to one or two families or to schools and a staff reviewer. Titles are evaluated using the *CSR* Software Evaluation Form. Software is selected based on the age of children and the type of hardware required. A grade of four and a half stars or higher corresponds to "Excellent" in *Only the Best*, and a grade of four stars corresponds to a "Good" rating.

Annual subscriptions to *Children's Software Revue* are available in the United States for $24 (U.S.) from Active Learning Associates at 800-993-9499. For more information on *Children's Software Revue* or to search their past evaluations, visit their Web site at <http://www.childrenssoftware.com>.

ConnSENSE

ConnSENSE (Connecticut Special Education Network for Software Evaluation) is an activity of the A. J. Pappanikou Center Technology Lab at the University of Connecticut. The project identifies software especially helpful for students with disabilities, evaluating it for overall quality and specific use in special education and diverse learner programs. Software is evaluated by technology lab staff using an evaluation instrument developed by the project. These reviews are then presented in the *ConnSENSE Bulletin*.

Evaluation results are given grades of "Way Cool" and "Cool." Programs that receive a "Way Cool" rating are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*, and those that receive a "Cool" rating are designated "Good."

For more information about ConnSENSE reviews, visit the technology lab at <http://www.pappanikou.uconn.edu/csbull.html> or contact Chauncy N. Rucker, A.J. Pappanikou Center Technology Lab, 249 Glenbrook Road, U64, Storrs, CT 06269-2064. Phone: 860-486-5035. E-mail: rucker@uconnvm.uconn.edu.

Developmental Software Awards

The Developmental Software Awards are presented yearly to exceptional software products that meet children's interests, needs, and abilities. Submitted products are separated into two age-appropriate levels: 3–7 and 8–12. Software is evaluated using the Haugland Developmental Scale and is then field-tested in classrooms and homes. Awards are presented in seven categories: creativity, language, math and science, multipurpose, multicultural, problem solving, and thematic focus.

The software awards are featured yearly in the *Early Childhood Education Journal*. Other Developmental Software titles are featured in *Young Children and Technology: A World of Discovery*, a book by Susan Haugland and June Wright. For more information, visit their web site at, <http://cstl.semo.edu/kidscomp/>. The Developmental Software Awards are sponsored by the KIDS Project, Kids Interacting With Developmental Software. Dr. Haugland directs the KIDS Project and is the sole evaluator for the awards.

EdPress--The Association of Educational Publishers' Educational Technology Awards[New!]

Created in 1996, the EdPress Educational Technology Distinguished Achievement Awards recognize excellence in educational software and Internet publishing. Award categories are curricular (preschool, primary, middle school, and high school/adult), home learning software (ages 2–7, 6–11, 10–15 and 14–adult), and educational Web sites (electronic publications, organizations, institutions, and schools). The judges panel consists of educators, curriculum experts, software program reviewers, and education editors. These judges review and comment upon such aspects as originality, quality, and educational value of the product. All programs nominated for these awards receive an "Excellent" rating in *Only the Best*.

Further information on these awards can be obtained by contacting the EdPress office at Rowan University, 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701. Phone: 609-256-4610. E-mail: edpress@aol.com. Web site: <http://www.edpress.org/>.

Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools

This large Northern Virginia district evaluates educational software and multimedia programs on a continuing basis. Programs rated "Good" to "Excellent" are included in the district's database of approved instructional materials. If a program is included in the database, it receives a "Good" rating in *Only the Best*.

Software titles are first identified for review by district teachers and the district's Department of Instructional Services. Evaluations are completed by two teachers in the curriculum area for which the program is intended, and by one curriculum specialist, who makes the final decision on approval.

For more information, contact Fran Gallagher, Coordinator, Elementary and Middle School Technology Programs, Instructional Services Department, 3705 Crest Drive, Annandale, VA 22003. Phone: 703-846-8620. E-mail: fgallagher@fc.fcps.k12.va.us.

Fermilab Lederman Science Center, Teacher Resource Center

Located at the Lederman Science Education Center in Batavia, Illinois, the Teacher Resource Center (TRC) was established in 1989 as a clearinghouse of materials and resources for PreK-12 educators in mathematics, science, and technology. Educational materials are housed there for on-site use, inspection, and evaluation. In 1994, the TRC was established as an Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education Demonstration Site.

Since 1994, the Teacher Resource Center and the Mathematics and Science Consortia of the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) have been holding an annual "Educational Software Review." Educators are instructed in the process of software evaluation and participate in evaluating the latest educational software received during that year. At the end of their evaluations, reviewers are asked to list five products that they consider exemplary. All programs on this list are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

For more information, contact Susan Dahl, Teacher Resource Center, Fermilab Lederman Science Center, Box 500, MS 777, Batavia, IL 60510-0500. Phone: 630-840-3094. E-mail: sdahl@fnal.gov.

Florida Department of Education

For several years, Florida has provided funds for its school districts to purchase software and multimedia programs. Annually, each school and district office is asked to submit a nomination form for up to 10 software titles. A statewide committee then reviews each program to ensure it meets the needs of schools throughout Florida. These programs are then listed in the Florida Educational Software Project Catalog. Programs included in this catalog are rated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

For more information, contact Peter Lenkway, Administrator, Office of Educational Technology, Florida Department of Education, Florida Education Center, Room 501-B, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400. Phone: 904-488-0980. Fax: 904-488-3691. E-mail: lenkwap@mail.firn.edu. For more information or to search for a specific title, visit the Florida Educational Software Catalog on the Internet at <http://www.itrc.ucf.edu/doecat/>.

Highland Park (NJ) School District[New!]

This evaluation group, new to *Only the Best*, consists of teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists who review software on the basis of pedagogical and curricular considerations. Their reviews are based on a three point scale with a rating of three being deemed exemplarily, two equivalent to good and one equaling poor. In terms of *Only the Best*, a three translates into an "Excellent" rating and a two is considered "Good."

Further information on the evaluation efforts of this school district can be obtained by contacting Debra Sheard, Technology Coordinator, Highland Park School District, 435 Mansfield Street, Highland Park, NJ 08904. Phone: 732-572-6990.

History Computer Review

History Computer Review (*HCR*) was founded in 1985 to promote computer-assisted history instruction. *HCR* reaches a worldwide audience of history teachers interested in using electronic tools to reach today's students in ways that promote the imaginative reconstruction of the past, the acquisition of verbal and cognitive skills, and an interest in the application of historical information to evaluate present reality.

In 14 years of publication, *HCR* has published numerous articles and hundreds reviews of books and software of potential use for secondary school social studies teachers or university history professors.

Current subscription rates: $20 for U.S. addresses, $25 for non-U.S. addresses. To subscribe to *HCR* or for information on submitting articles, write to James B.M. Schick, Department of History, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS 66762-7543. Phone: 316-235-4317. Fax: 316-235-4080. E-mail: jschick@mail.pittstate.edu.

To become a software reviewer or to solicit a review of a specific program, write to Leslie Gene Hunter, Department of History, Texas A&M University at Kingsville, Kingsville, TX 78363. E-mail: L-Hunter2@tamuk.edu.

ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium

The International Society for Technology in Education's (ISTE) Educational Software Evaluation Consortium compiles an annual preview guide listing favorably reviewed software and multimedia programs for grades K–12. The programs are selected by representatives of leading technology evaluation services in North America. Programs are listed on the basis of critical evaluations and discussion among the Consortium's participants. Programs included in the guide receive a "Good" rating in *Only the Best*.

Copies of the *1999 Educational Software Preview Guide* are available from the International Society for Technology in Education, 480 Charnelton Street, Eugene, OR 97401. Phone: 800-336-5191. Web Site: <http:www.iste.org>.

Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools

For each of the past 11 years, the Jefferson County school district has conducted evaluations of various software titles. These evaluations are compiled into an extensive list of recommended titles for K-12. The list is distributed to schools in Jefferson County. Software is reviewed by educators specializing in different fields. Evaluation criteria include quality of delivery, content, and strong relation to curriculum standards. Programs are rated numerically from 1 to 10. Programs that receive a 9 or a 10 from Jefferson County are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*, and those receiving a 7 or 8 are designated "Good."

The Jefferson County evaluations can be found on the Internet at <http://204.98.1.2/area_teams/software/index.html>. For more information, contact John Canuel, Director, Instructional Services, Jefferson County Schools, P.O. Box 4001, Golden, CO 80401. Phone: 303-982-6845. Fax: 303-982-6943. E-mail: jcanuel@jeffco.k12.co.us.

Learning Magazine Teachers' Choice Awards

Each year a panel of experienced K-6 teachers test the effectiveness of hundreds of products in the classroom. Evaluations are based on quality, instructional value, ease of use, and innovation. The Teachers' Choice Award winners are described in the January edition of *Learning Magazine*. Software titles tapped for this award are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

For more information, contact Teacher's Choice Awards Coordinator Kym Roundtree, *Learning Magazine*, 3515 West Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27403. Phone: 336-851-8412. E-mail: kroundtree@theeducationcenter.com.

Lesley College Instructional Computing Department

The Instructional Computing Department at Lesley College is a state-certified educational software preview center. Their educational software collection contains more than 2,000 titles for prekindergarten through college-level students. New educational software titles are continually evaluated by faculty, staff, students, and area educators. Instructional design, content, assessment, teacher support and the technical quality of the program are all considered during the evaluation process. "Excellent" and "Good" ratings directly correspond to those in *Only the Best*.

For more information, contact Instructional Computing Director Eileen Barnett, Lesley College, 29 Everett Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: 617-349-8834. E-mail: ebarnett@mail.lesley.edu.

MultiMedia Schools

The Product Reviews-in-Brief section in each issue of *MultiMedia Schools* includes evaluations of software products for the K–12 curriculum. Programs are reviewed by educators and, in most cases, are tested in a classroom environment. The evaluators must prepare a report card for each product covering installation, content and features, ease of use, and product support. The overall rating is based on a five-star scale, five stars denoting "Outstanding." Programs with four or five stars are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*, and those with three stars are designated "Good."

Annual subscriptions to *MultiMedia Schools* are available in the United States and Canada for $38 and in Mexico for $51. For more information about the reviews section, please contact Ferdi Serim, 2809 Brandywine St. NW, Washington, DC 20008. Phone: 202-244-6710. E-mail: ferdi@infotoday.com.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*)

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction operates an extensive education software and multimedia evaluation service for state schools. Programs are evaluated by teachers, school administrators, or subject area program consultants who are experienced in the use of computer and multimedia courseware in classroom instruction. Approved programs are included in the state's Advisory List of Instructional Technology. Programs on this list are designated "Good" in *Only the Best*.

These evaluations can be found in *School Library Journal* in the CD-ROM and Software Review column. For more information about the evaluations, contact Media Evaluation Services, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 301 N. Wilmington St., Raleigh, NC 27601. Phone: 919-715-5357. Annual subscriptions to the *School Library Journal* are available for $87.50 in the United States. Contact *School Library Journal*, P.O. Box 57559, Boulder, CO 80322-7559. Phone: 800-456-9409. Fax: 800-824-4746.

Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools

For the Prince George's County (MD) software evaluation program, content area supervisors, teachers, central office instructional technology staff, and school-based computer coordinators suggest titles

worthy of review. Supervisors, teachers, and lay people from the community make up the evaluation committee. Members of the committee are trained in the evaluation process and separately review the same program, work to reach consensus on program quality, and complete an extensive evaluation that includes a narrative description of the software as well as suggestions for program use. As a final step, all software approved by the evaluation committee must have the approval of content area supervisors before it is approved by the Board of Education and included on the district's approved software list. Approved software is rated either good or excellent and these ratings are also designated "Good" or "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

Contact Tina Fortson-Rivers, Division of Information Technology Services, Bonnie Johns Center, Room 213, Prince George's County Public Schools, 8437 Landover Road, Landover, MD 20785. Phone: 301-386-1608 ext. 237. Fax: 301-386-1660.

Software & Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies)

The Software & Information Industry Association's (SIIA) annual Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies) are the software industry's answer to the Academy Awards. SIIA members and nonmembers nominate software for awards in consumer, education, and business categories. SIIA members cast votes in the final ballot. A program placed on the final ballot in the education categories ranks "Good" and a Codies winner ranks "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

The awards are posted on the World Wide Web and can be found at <http://www.siia.net/>. For more information, contact Arnita Grose, Software & Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036. Phone: 202-452-1600, ext. 309. E-mail: agrose@spa.org.

Technology & Learning

Each year, *Technology & Learning* magazine (formerly known as *Classroom Computer Learning*) evaluates the latest educational software and multimedia programs, selects the best new programs, and presents them with the Software Awards of Excellence. Programs selected by the magazine are the result of three rounds of judging with at least four evaluators spending many hours on each program. Classroom appropriateness, quality, and usability of supporting documentation and student-teacher materials are just a few of the criteria used to evaluate the software. Programs selected for this honor are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*.

To subscribe or request back issues, contact *Technology & Learning*, Peter Li Inc., P.O. Box 49727, Dayton, OH 45449-0727. Phone: 800-543-4383. For further information about *Technology & Learning* Awards, visit their Web site at <http://www.techlearning.com/software_awards.html> or contact the Senior Editor, Susan Melester.

TechTrends

Every issue of *TechTrends* contains a Media Reviews column that includes in-depth evaluations of educational multimedia. Each review consists of a description, a summary of strengths and weaknesses, and an overall grade. Programs that receive an *A+*, *A*, or *A-* are designated "Excellent" in *Only the Best*, and those receiving a *B+*, *B*, or *B-* are designated "Good."

TechTrends is published by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology 202-347-7834. An annual subscription is $40 in the United States and $44 in Canada. For more information about Media Reviews, contact Dan Surry, University of Southern Mississippi, Southern Station Box 5036, Hattiesburg, MS 39406. Phone: 601-266-4446.

Highest-Rated Programs 1999–2000*

(Please consult the Interdisciplinary Index for titles that appear in more than on subject area)

The Arts
Better Photography: Understanding Exposure and Learning to See Creatively
Crayola Make a Masterpiece
With Open Eyes

Early Childhood
Big Thinkers Kindergarten
Dr. Seuss Kindergarten Deluxe
How Many Bugs in a Box?
Reader Rabbit's Kindergarten

Foreign Language
French for the Real World

Health
Life Begins

Language Arts
Author's Toolkit
CornerStone Language Arts Series
Curious Creatures
Curious George Learns to Spell
Earobics Pro Plus, Step 1
Funny Monsters For Tea
The Glowbird Collection
Grammar for the Real World
I Spy
Let's Go Read! An Island Adventure
Madeline Classroom Companion: 1st and 2nd Grade Reading Deluxe
Reading Mansion
Reading Who? Reading You!
Simon Sounds it Out
Spell It Deluxe
STAR READING, A Computer-Adaptive Reading Test
That's a Fact, Jack!
World of Words

Mathematics
Carmen Sandiego Math Detective
Fizz and Martina's Math Adventure: Blue Falls Elementary
Fraction Attraction
Hot Dog Stand: The Works
JumpStart Math for Kindergartners
Mighty Math: Astro Algebra
Mystery Math Island
An Odyssey of Discovery: Exploring Numbers 1.0
PrimeTime Math: Fire!
Tenth Planet Explores Math: Mirror Symmetry
Tenth Planet Explores Math: Shapes Within Shapes
Windows on Math: Volume 1

Multidisciplinary Programs
Big Thinkers First Grade
The Clue Finders 3rd Grade Adventures
JumpStart 2nd Grade
JumpStart Kindergarten
My Personal Tutor: Preschool-Grade 1
Reader Rabbit's 1st Grade

*See page 95 for a listing of *Only the Best* Classics

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Highest-Rated Programs 1999–2000*

(Please consult the Interdisciplinary Index for titles that appear in more than on subject area)

Music
Making Music
Music Ace

Problem Solving
Adventures of Batman and Robin Activity Center
CCCNet
Thinkin' Things Sky Island Mysteries

Reference
The Complete National Geographic
Encarta Africana
Encarta Reference Suite 1999
Encyclopaedia Britannica on CD-ROM
Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia

Science
Animals in Danger
Earth Explorer
Eyewitness Virtual Reality: Earth Quest
A Field Trip to the Rainforest Deluxe
The Great Solar System Rescue
JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade: Mission Earth Quest
LEGO Mindstorms
Nine Worlds
Orcas in Our Midst
PhysicalElementa: The World of Physics
Rainforest Explorer
RedShift 3
Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores the Rainforest
Science Court: Water Cycle
Star Wars DroidWorks
Stars and Stories
Thinkin' Science
Thinkin' Science Series--Zap!
The Way Things Work: Pinball Science

Social Studies
America History Inspirer: The Civil War
Ask Asia
Children's Atlas of the United States
Cold War
Community Construction Kit
Encarta Virtual Globe
Facts on File
His Name Was Lincoln
Meiko: A Story of Japanese Culture
My First Amazing History Explorer
Native Americans: People of the Plains
The Oregon Trail 3rd Edition: Pioneer Adventures
Rand McNally New Millennium World Atlas Educational Edition
The Russian Revolution
SimCity 3000
Xpeditions

Student Helper
Inside the SAT & ACT Deluxe

Tools
Kid Pix Studio Deluxe

Typing
Type for Fun!

*See page 95 for a listing of *Only the Best* Classics

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Better Photography: Understanding Exposure and Learning to See Creatively

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Diamar Interactive

Copyright: 1995

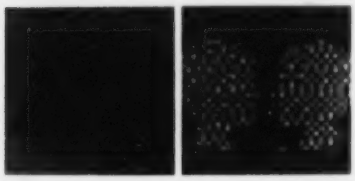
Grade(s): 8–12

Subject(s): Arts
Photography
Creativity
Visual Arts
Tools

Cost: $50

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386SX or faster, 4MB hard drive space, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers;
Macintosh System 7.1 or higher, 4MB RAM, 2MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **multimedia photography tutorial** features the CD-ROMS *Learning to See Creatively* and *Understanding Exposure*. Originally sold separately, these CD-ROMS are now packaged together with a teacher's guide that contains lesson plans and suggested activities. The *Understanding Exposure* CD-ROM contains hundreds of high-quality photographs, all with accompanying text and some with audio, that serve as examples of different shutter speeds, apertures, types of film, and lenses. The *Learning to See Creatively* CD-ROM looks at the artistic side of photography and features sections on learning the elements of design, picking up composition techniques, and using available light to best capture images. Some of the special features of these CD-ROMS include a Before and After section that takes the user on location and gives two different pictures of the same scene and interactive theaters, workshops, and labs that students can explore.

Applications for Diverse Learners: Many of the pictures are accompanied by audio explanations that help students with reading difficulties understand the content.

Tips: A *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator recommends this program be used in a single-computer classroom with a large screen hookup that would enable the teacher to walk students through elements of the photographic experience. Evaluators with the California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse note this program's versatility, stating that it could be used to supplement teacher instruction, provide individual beginner tutorials, or refine understanding for advanced photographers.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Book Report*, September/October 1998; *MultiMedia Schools*, November/December 1998. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998.

Crayola Make a Masterpiece

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
IBM

Copyright: 1998

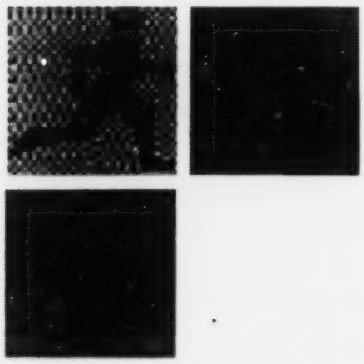
Grade(s): K–4

Subject(s): Art
Drawing
Creativity
Animation

Cost: $19.95; Lab pack (5) $84.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 75MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.5 or higher, PowerMac compatible, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **creative drawing program** allows young students to design their own work of art using the latest in computer-aided graphics. Within the program, students have access to a wide variety of tools such as crayons, chalk, markers, pencils, oils, and watercolors, which they use to create their artwork. Special tools such as shaving cream, ribbons, and sprinkles add a unique perspective to the artwork. Students can also tap into any of the 90 diverse backgrounds, 40 animated stickers, and 12 magic effects that are included, or they can import their own photographs and graphics into the program. The final product can be exported using e-mail. Additional resources include a journal featuring student's artwork, short write-ups of famous artwork and artisans, and more than 200 "idea starters." The included teacher's manual contains instructional objectives, suggested activities, interdisciplinary possibilities, glossaries, lesson plans, and classroom management strategies.

Applications for Diverse Learners: The program is hosted by an animated guide named Scribble who provides inspiration through drawings, music, and animation. Scribble's presence and the icon-based interface make the program accessible to nonreaders.

Tips: A *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator notes that each of the artistic tools closely imitates the actual medium: "The crayon generates a textured line, the watercolor brush is indeed watery, and the chalk renders a pastel grainy line." This evaluator raves about *Make a Masterpiece,* stating that she was "mesmerized by the program. I can see it used as a cross-curricular tool for younger students, as well as a creative outlet for their free time in the classroom, and I guarantee that your students will wait in line to use it."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Developmental Software Awards, 1999; *MultiMedia Schools*, January/February 1999. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1999.

With Open Eyes

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Voyager c/o Forest Technologies

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 3–12

Subject(s): Art
Painting
Sculptures

Cost (School Edition): $39.95; Lab pack (5) $139.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This interactive tour of the Art Institute of Chicago allows students to see firsthand the masterpieces of Van Gogh, Picasso, Monet, and many others. The collection spans 5,000 years and features works from countries as varied as France, India, Japan, and Zaire. This world class collection is accompanied by audio clips that give the name of the artwork, the artist, and a description of the piece. As teachers or students view the collection, they can capture images using the camera icon. Pictures of the artwork are then saved to a scrapbook that can be converted into a slide show. Students can use the magnifying glass to take a closer look at the works of art and in some cases they can rotate the image to look at a piece of art from a different angle.

Applications for Diverse Learners: Audio clips introduce and describe the various works of art, making the program accessible to students who have limited reading abilities.

Tips: Judges with the *Technology and Learning* software awards call this program, "a wonderful introduction to art . . . which offers activities and multimedia elements designed to help [students] explore paintings, sculptures, photographs, textiles and other masterpieces." *MultiMedia Schools* evaluators like the realism of the program, noting that "you can see people looking at the artwork in a museum. You hear the sounds of people moving and talking through the museum . . .all that's missing is a glass of white wine!" This same evaluator concludes, "the more we worked with the program, the more we liked it. When groups of children gathered around the computer, they enjoyed looking and talking about the pictures."

Evaluator Conclusions: **Excellent**—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *MultiMedia Schools*, March/April 1996. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consoritium, 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), April 1996; *Technology and Learning*, November/December 1996.

Big Thinkers Kindergarten

(CD-ROM: WIN/MAC HYBRID)

Publisher:
Humongous Entertainment

Copyright: 1997

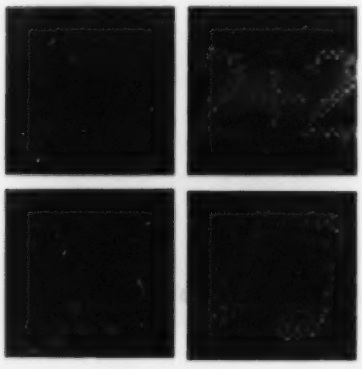
Grade(s): PreK–1

Subject(s): Early Childhood
Spelling
Counting
Measurement
Music

Cost: $19.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66 MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers;
Macintosh System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 5MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive activity program** helps students with the fundamentals of early learning, specifically mathematics and reading. The program is part of the *Big Thinkers* series available from Humongous (each of the *Big Thinkers* titles teaches skills in five subject areas: math, language arts, sciences, creative arts, and thinking skills). In *Big Thinkers Kindergarten*, the Brightly Twins, Ben and Becky, lead children through 16 activities that focus on developing specific skills such as telling time, estimating, and measuring distances, counting, adding, using logic, sequencing and patterning, and learning the alphabet. This program works in an interdisciplinary fashion and also covers such topics as art, music, environmental science, and geography. Children earn "smart stars" as they go, which they can use to play an on-screen board game. Users will be amused by Ben and Becky's antics, which include Ben's face turning into a clock and birds perching on their legs in an activity focused on addition.

Tips: Florida Department of Education evaluators note that this program "saves games, automatically adjusts the difficulty level, prints at any point, and provides new content with each play for most activities." A *Library Talk* reviewer adds, "the kindergarten and first grade classes at my school loved visiting the Brightly twins' home." Evaluators at *Children's Software Revue* like how the games integrated the characters into the theme and conclude, "overall, this is one of the best variety packs we've seen to date."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, 1998; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *Library Talk*, September/October 1998.

Dr. Seuss Kindergarten Deluxe

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Broderbund

Copyright: 1998

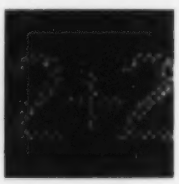
Grade(s): PreK–1

Subject(s): Early Childhood
Language Arts
Reading
Mathematics

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486DX/66 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, video and sound cards compatible with Direct X;
Macintosh System7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: Students' math and reading skills will be challenged as Dr. Seuss' wonderful characters come to life in this **interactive activity program**. Gerald McGrew needs to find exotic animals (such as the Lorax, Star-bellied Sneetches, and Barbaloots) for the zoo that he is building in Seussville. Helping Gerald in his search, children fill the zoo by completing eight reading and math activities. The activities include an alphabet game that teaches the order of letters, a Fill in the Missing Letter activity that teaches sight words and phonics, and a measurement game which has students size-up Seuss' creatures using unorthodox units of measurement (such as hats and umbrellas). Successful completion of the activities leads to students collecting enough animals to open the zoo. In all, *Dr Seuss Kindergarten Deluxe* contains more than 250 lessons with 200 animations to maintain children's interest. Teachers or parents have the ability to set the difficulty level and track individual student progress.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators note that this program scored highly among their test groups and that theme of collecting zoo creatures was "strong enough to hook even some older siblings." These evaluators did note, however, that the program contains some minor flaws such as a lack of a printing option and confusion about how many times students had to complete an activity in order to be awarded one of the Seuss creatures.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—American Library Association's "Best" List, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, September/October 1998; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the CODIES), 1999.

How Many Bugs in a Box?

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Simon and Schuster Interactive

Copyright: 1994

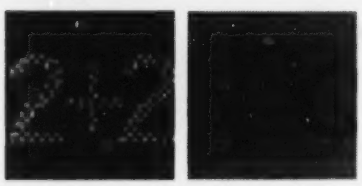
Grade(s): PreK–2

Subject(s): Early Childhood
Mathematics
Addition
Reading

Cost: $19.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/25MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 5MB RAM, 2.5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Based on David A. Carter's best-selling pop-up book, this **interactive activity program** challenges young learners to develop such mathematics skills as counting, sorting, and matching as they take on eight varied activities organized in a game-like environment. Some of the activities include Ferris Wheel, which asks children to click on the right number of bugs to get them on the amusement ride; Go Buggy, which challenges students to follow a number pattern in a maze; Read Along and Explore, a digitized book that kids can follow at their own pace; and Juice Bar, where children visit with their bug buddies and listen to songs. Each of the activities is hosted by Barker Bug who reads the directions aloud. Parents have the ability to set differing levels of difficulty. Our evaluators note that the documentation accompanying the CD-ROM is helpful and even includes lyrics to the included songs.

Applications for Diverse Learners: *ConnSENSE Bulletin* evaluators note that this program would be appropriate for older children with learning disabilities who are having trouble developing their mathematics skills. Additionally, children who have trouble with reading can still enjoy this program because the directions are read aloud.

Tips: *ConnSENSE Bulletin* evaluators note that the best thing they found about the program is "how music, rhyming, and repetition are incorporated throughout. The child doesn't realize that he/she is working and learning. They just know that they are having fun." Evaluators with *Children's Software Revue* add that they were "impressed by the clear, friendly graphics, quality music, and generally smooth design."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*ConnSENSE Bulletin*, February 1999. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, August/September 1995; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, October 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999.

Reader Rabbit's Kindergarten

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1997

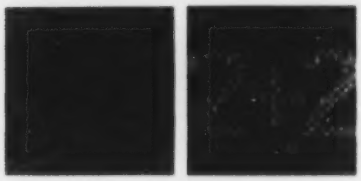
Grade(s): K–1

Subject(s): Mathematics
Language Arts
Reading
Thinking Skills

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 13MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, speakers and sound card; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 processor or Power Mac, 8MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space; 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors, sound card.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive skill-building program** helps students develop their abilities in mathematics, reading, and thinking skills. Teaming up with Reader Rabbit and Mat the Mouse, students take part in interactive activities and exploratory games and learn fun animal facts. This program's main activities include Canoe Match, a number, letter, and shape matching activity; Diner Line-up, a sequencing and ordering activity; Get Your Bearings, a direction and map skills activity; and Number Lumber, a math thinking activity. Optional activities include Camp Clock in which students practice their time-telling skills, Action Reaction, a conflict resolution game, and Playful Painting, in which students create their own artwork. This package includes a teacher/parent handbook that contains directions, objectives, and tips on how to effectively use this program.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators note that there are "lots of nice touches to the program." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools reviewers add that this program tracks each learner's progress and provides a chart of each activity's objectives. Further, assistance is given to students if they provide an incorrect answer. Binghamton (NY) City Schools evaluators conclude, "our teachers found [this program] to be an excellent resource for beginning first graders to review their skills."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Binghamton (NY) City School District, September 1997; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, September/October 1997; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1997.

French for the Real World

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 6–10

Subject(s): Foreign Languages
French

Cost: $30

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM Drive, 256 colors, sound card and speakers, microphone (optional); **Macintosh** System 7.5.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **foreign language immersion program** puts students in the driver's seat of a racing car as they tour the French countryside. As race car drivers, students compete against the computer in a variety of activities that build and test their French language skills. Successfully completing an activity allows the student to move on and possibly win the race. Activities include conversing in French with locals at a fruit stand, conjugating verbs in order to take a shortcut in the race, and following directions to make a phone call. Along the course of the race, students will be learning more than 1200 words and phrases that are typically covered in a first years language curriculum. In addition to the development of French vocabulary, students will also build their listening (extracting meaning from what others say in French), speaking (comparing student pronunciation with that of native French speakers), conversational, reading, and grammar skills. All of the directions and activities are in French, but there is a help feature and a French–English dictionary in case a student gets stuck. *French for the Real World* has four levels of difficulty with seven types of activities and three arcade-style games.

Tips: A reviewer with the *Book Report* recommends purchase of this program as supplementary material, that can be used "to provide students with a fun and educational method of practicing language skills that have been introduced in a first-year French class." *Children's Software Revue* evaluators add that the CD is excellent and will enable a first-year French student to really hone his or her skills."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, September/October 1998. **Good**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, September 1998; *Book Report*, March/April 1999; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998.

Life Begins

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Quality Multimedia

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 6–12

Subject(s): Health
Science
Biology

Cost: $69.95; Lab pack (5) $216.95; Site license (30) $1,135

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 75MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM; **Macintosh** System 7.5 or later, 25MHZ 68040 or faster, 20MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: Using 38 minutes of video from ABC television's Academy Award winning documentary *Journey into Life: World of the Unborn*, along with 22 animations, 13 slide shows, 500 photographs, 176 anatomical illustrations, and 11 graphs, this **multimedia health program** teaches human reproduction from conception to birth. *Life Begins* features six main sections for students to explore: Human Body addresses the mysteries of the genetic code and teaches students about the process of sexual maturation; Man and Woman offers insights into the male and female reproductive system as well as addresses gender-related health issues; Pregnancy chronicles conception and the 40 weeks of in vitro human development; Labor and Birth details the sequence of labor and the development of the newborn; and Life Choices addresses students' emotional health issues such as saying no effectively, ending toxic relationships, and developing self-esteem. A 300+ word glossary, which pronounces the words for the students, explains the terms used in this program.

Tips: This program is careful to avoid controversial issues such as abortion, alternative life-styles, and contraception and features a customizable lockout that lets teachers or parents place limits on what children can see. A Binghamton (NY) City Schools reviewer calls this program, "an excellent resource for health and biology students in middle or high school" and adds that some portions may even be appropriate for students on the elementary level.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Binghamton (NY) City School District, December 1998; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, 1999.

Author's Toolkit

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 4–8

Subject(s): Writing
Language Arts

Cost: $69.95; Lab Pack (5) $99.95; Site license (25) $399

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 256 colors, 2X CD-ROM; **Macintosh** System 6.07 or later, 68040 processor or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This **comprehensive writing tool** allows students to concentrate on ideas and structure without the intimidation of a blank word processor screen. The program contains specialized tools that help students to draft, organize, and proof their work. In Draftmaker, prompts are included, that vary according to the writing objectives. Students can use these prompts to get started or if they are experiencing writer's block. The Wordbuilder feature enables students to build a word bank that they can use while creating their work. StructureMaker allows students to reorganize notes, write plays, or record their thoughts in imaginative diaries. A word processor, complete with spell check and a thesaurus, is available for students once they are ready to produce a final document. One interesting feature of *Author's Toolkit* is a speech component that reads back the written materials in several voice styles.

Tips: California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse evaluators note that "this word processor has all of the features students will need to edit, format, and arrange their writing so it is attractive when it is printed." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators add that this program, "allows the student to create and customize his writing through a whole range of writing activities." *Technology Connection* was pleased with the included documentation because it provided samples of many of the program's suggested uses at several grade levels. This review also indicates that this program "may lend itself best to settings where there are many computers and all students can work on projects simultaneously."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology Connection*, April 1995. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, November 1995.

CornerStone Language Arts Series

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN; Diskette: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
SkillsBank Corporation/Learning Company

Copyright: 1995; 1998

Grade(s): 3–8

Subject(s): Language Arts
Grammar
Reading
Spelling

Cost: $129 per level; $387 for all three levels; Lab pack (5)$774; Site license (50) $2,985

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386 or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive (for CD version) 256 colors; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 4MB RAM, 8MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM for CD version),13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive drill-and-practice program** is designed to develop the basic language arts skills of children in grades 3–8. The program comes in three levels—grades 3 and 4 (Level A), 5 and 6 (Level B), and 7 and 8 (Level C). Within each of the levels, emphasis is given to four content areas: capitalization, punctuation, usage, and spelling. Each particular lesson (175 in all) follows a unique five-step approach designed to meet the needs of all students. Step 1 is a warm-up exercise that assesses each students language arts skills. Step 2 is a review that reteaches skills and provides practice. Step 3 is a quiz that gauges the learning of key concepts. Step 4 reinforces concepts in a game format, and Step 5 is a worksheet that allows the student to have additional practice and offers a creative writing challenge. In addition to the lessons, this program offers pre- and post- tests for each topic. Teachers can use the pre-test to determine which students need extra help and which students may be ready for more challenging materials. Post-tests can be administered at the end of each lesson to demonstrate mastery. The enclosed teacher's management system allows the instructor to modify lessons and generate reports on each individual student.

Tips: A reviewer with *MultiMedia Schools* says the strengths of this program include its "comprehensive coverage of basic language skills and the flexibility provided by the management system." This reviewer adds that the program is "very well suited to individualized diagnostic testing, skill-building, and record-keeping, which makes it useful in a classroom setting or in a flexibly scheduled computer lab." However, Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators warn that although this is an effective diagnostic and instructional piece of software, "higher-level thinking skills are not addressed."

Evaluator Conclusions: **Excellent—**Florida Department of Education,1998–99; *MultiMedia Schools*, November/December 1997. **Good—**California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology and Learning*'s Software Awards, 1993–94.

Curious Creatures

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Curriculum Associates

Copyright: 1998

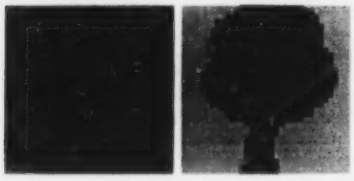
Grade(s): 2–8

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Science
Zoology
ESL

Cost: $39.95 for 1 hybrid CD-ROM. Teacher's guide and copy of each of the five books available for an additional $22.95.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space; 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **multimedia interdisciplinary program** is the latest in the series of "reading for success" titles from Curriculum Associates. Featuring stories about bats, owls, snakes, spiders, and wolves, *Curious Creatures* encourages reluctant readers to learn about interesting animals in a user-friendly format containing photography, video clips, and interactive games and activities. This program offers either individual or collaborative learning experiences that strengthen reading and writing skills and help to build science vocabulary. Features of the program include Pages Alive, which are electronic versions of the five books (the print versions are available for separate purchase); Jigsaw Pages, in which students create a wildlife field guide identifying each animals physical and behavioral traits; Mix N' Math, which challenges children to drag- and -drop puzzle pieces to complete an illustration of the "Curious Creatures"; and Create It, which presents sentence starters that encourage students to write stories about the creatures.

Applications for Diverse Learners: Some of our evaluators note that this program would be beneficial to use with ESL students who would like to develop their English literacy skills in a challenging environment.

Tips: The CD-ROM features a teacher's guide with activity instructions, discussion ideas, answer keys, and a printable technical guide.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Learning Magazine*'s Teacher's Choice Awards, 1999. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), February 1998; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1998; *Technology Connection*, April 1998.

Curious George Learns to Spell

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Houghton Mifflin

Copyright: 1998

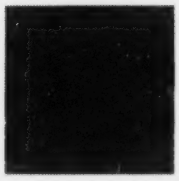
Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Spelling
Phonics
Reading

Cost (School Edition): $60; Lab pack (5) $120; Lab pack (15) $299

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 12MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space; 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 12MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive.

Intelligences:



Description: The mischievous monkey is back in this **interactive phonics-based spelling program**. In typical fashion, Curious George gets himself into trouble by losing a talking bird and by giving away books at the library. George then goes to a newspaper to write about his adventures. In all, *Curious George Learns to Spell* features 12 narrated and illustrated episodes that focus on concepts such as word endings, long and short vowels, and contractions. Students will learn more than 1,000 words by the time they complete the activities and will also develop their reading, writing, proofreading, and spelling pattern recognition skills. Teachers can customize this program for individual needs by selecting the concepts and difficulty level that each student experiences. However, our evaluators note that access to this customization tool is not password protected.

Tips: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reviewers note that this program "could be used in language arts centers and computer labs to provide additional practice and reinforcement of spelling and reading skills with basic vocabulary." *Editors Note*: This CD-ROM is also sold in a home version ($20) entitled *Curious George Reads, Writes, and Spells*.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, January/February 1999. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, November/December 1998; *ConnSENSE Bulletin*, February 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1999.

Earobics Pro Plus, Step 1

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Cognitive Concepts

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): PreK–2

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Phonics
Auditory Skills

Cost (School Edition): $299. A scaled down home version is available for $59.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 16MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive.

Intelligences:

Description: Using a gaming format as a motivational tool, this **literacy-based program** teaches skills such as auditory processing, phonemic awareness, and language comprehension skills. The interactive gaming approach encourages students to get involved in their own learning and maintains their interest through varying levels of difficulty. In all, there are six educational games that help to build children's literacy through various tasks. Caterpillar Connection encourages children to blend syllables into words, Basket Full of Eggs develops auditory discrimination, Karloon's Balloons addresses both auditory attention and memory, Rhyme Time challenges students to identify similar sounding words, C. C. Coal Car teaches sound-symbol correspondence and phonemic recognition, and Rap-A-Tap-Tap encourages students to keep the beat as they develop phoneme segmentation skills.

Tips: A progress chart, which is automatically updated after each round of play, keeps track of each student's development. With the *ProPlus* version, teachers can customize many aspects of this program and can create individual education plans for their students (up to 25 students can be signed on by the teacher). A password security feature ensures that student's records and teacher's comments are kept strictly confidential.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Award, 1999; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99.

Funny Monsters for Tea

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1997

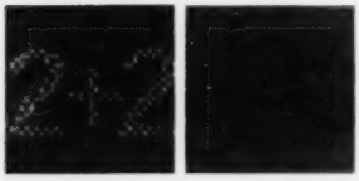
Grade(s): K–4

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Spelling
Mathematics

Cost (School Edition): $79.95. Lab packs and site licenses are also available. Contact publisher for most recent pricing information.

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486 or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive literacy building program** encourages students to develop a variety of skills as they join some nonthreatening monsters to complete six fun and engaging activities: Alphabet Soup encourages children to build and sound out words using word roots and letter clusters; Telling Time provides students with a variety of timepieces to learn about the meaning and relationship between seconds, minutes, and hours; Up the Stairs, available in three levels of difficulty, builds basic mathematics skills such as addition and multiplication; My Silly Poem helps students create funny rhymes; Musical Monsters helps students create their own "Monster Mash"; and Monsters in a Box introduces students to computer-based painting as they create, design, and paint their own monster.

Tips: In highly recommending this program, a *Technology Connection* evaluator writes, "with a delightful interface of animated objects and easy navigation, this CD-ROM incorporates thinking and problem solving with concept and skills development." This evaluator concludes, "the inclusion of a teacher's guide, containing many off-computer activities, makes this a valuable and comprehensive resource."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1998; *Technology Connection*, May/June 1998.

The Glowbird Collection

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Little Planet Publishing

Copyright: 1995

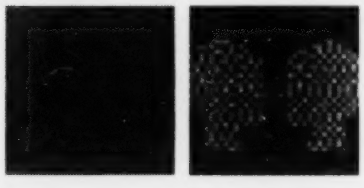
Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Spelling

Cost: $495 (four-disc set, single user; package includes teacher's disc, teacher's guide, video tape, and a set of sequence cards). Contact publisher for lab pack pricing.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers, microphone; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors, sound card, microphone.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive literacy package** is designed to encourage the development of young readers. Students begin by viewing and listening to a story. Next, students are asked to retell the story by revisiting key themes, investigating the story line, and sequencing events. Students use this knowledge to construct, record, and publish the story in their own words. This program develops skills such as reading comprehension, phonics, rhyming, sequencing, and writing. In all, *The Glowbird Collection* includes 20 ReadAlong books that provide students with opportunities to develop their vocabulary and reading skills. Each story focuses on themes such as environmental awareness, multicultural appreciation, and friendship. Students can work alone or in groups as animated characters provide encouragement. An assessment tool tracks students' progress as they master critical skills.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program features audio prompts as an aid to beginning readers or those with comprehension difficulties. *The Glowbird Collection* also allows teachers to set preferences for individual users thereby tailoring the program to specific needs.

Tips: A *MultiMedia Schools* reviewer highly recommends this program saying that it "uses a creative approach to encourage reading, writing, and thinking" but cautions that, "this is not a complete reading program, but would make an excellent supplement." Reviewers also note that because of its price and design, this program is not recommended for home use.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *MultiMedia Schools*, January/February 1998. **Good**—Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1998.

Grammar for the Real World

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 4–8

Subject(s): Language Arts
Grammar
Reading
Spelling

Cost: $30

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486DX/66 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.5.1 or higher, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: Reinforcing the idea that the correct use of grammar is important, this **interactive activity program** combines drills and games with a format that is both fun and educational. In the program, students are transported to Hollywood as try to make the grade at the World Film Studio. To catch on at the studio, students first have to build up their résumés by completing jobs that require the use of their grammar skills. Tasks in this section of the program include fixing the news anchor's statements before the broadcast, identifying parts of speech for the newsroom scripts, editing in the public relations and advertising departments, and assisting the studio's technical director. Success in completing the tasks leads to a high "schmooze-o-meter" rating, which helps students advance in their new "careers." The program also rewards students by letting them play grammar-based arcade games and participate in a game show (where they get to practice plurals and possessives). The culminating activity calls for students to become screenplay writers and directors as they create their own video using props, actors, and actions. Students can even have the actors read their scripts through computer synthesizer.

Tips: In highly recommending this program, a *MultiMedia Schools* reviewer notes that *Grammar for the Real World* is "aptly titled, it does focus on the importance of grammar in the real world and works hard to convey the concept that jobs do require attention to syntax, spelling, and mechanics, despite what youngsters may think." Evaluators with *Children's Software Revue* agree, stating that this program "does a particularly good job of taking a dull subject and making it interesting. For kids who need extra grammar practice, the program is perfect."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, January/February 1999; *MultiMedia Schools*, March/April 1999. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998.

I Spy

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Scholastic Incorporated

Copyright: 1997

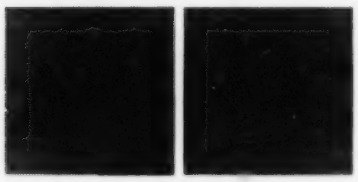
Grade(s): 2–6

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Writing
Spelling
Creativity
Problem Solving

Cost: $29.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 16MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Inspired by the picture riddle books of the same name, this **interactive literacy program** helps students develop their reading, writing, spelling, and problem solving skills. The program contains hundreds of riddles, puzzles, and activities in which children connect more than 1300 objects and word searches. Activities include Nature, in which students use a magnifying glass to explore the world around them; Balloon Popper, which leaves clues for students to follow to see how a machine works; and Oops Hoops!, which challenges students in a race against time to classify objects by common characteristics. Other activities ask students to organize their information with charts, make their own 3-D displays, and write their own stories. Our reviewers rank the ability to create and print your own *I Spy* riddles for others to try as a major strength of the program. These reviewers report that students can even record their riddles by voice if they have a microphone and sound card installed.

Tips: Included with the CD-ROM is a Parent's Guide that describes the educational benefits of the game and provides ideas for non computer-related learning activities. Judges with the Bologna New Media Awards call *I Spy* a "challenging multi-layered title that will provide children with hours of educational play. The interactive games and logical thinking puzzle are beautifully designed and lots of fun." *Library Talk* evaluators add that this program offers a "rich visual and auditory environment" with simple navigation and graphics of "high quality with sharp, bright colors and detailed items."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Awards, 1998; Developmental Software Awards, 1999; *Library Talk*, November/December 1998. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1999; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998.

Lets Go Read! An Island Adventure

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Edmark Corporation

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): Pre–K1

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Spelling
Phonics
Early Childhood

Cost: $45

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 90MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers;
Macintosh System7.01 or later, 68040 (25MHz or faster, PowerPC for speech recognition), 2X CD-ROM, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **phonics-based program** aids developing readers in acquiring the essential skills that they will need in order to be able read and write. The program begins as Robby the Raccoon discovers a message written on his tree. Unable to read the message himself, Robby enlists the help of Emily the Squirrel, with whom he travels to Letter Island to discover how words are put together. As Robby and Emily "meet" each of the letters that inhabit the island, they (along with the user) are presented with nine activities that must be mastered in order to progress to the next letter. Some of the activities ask students to piece together puzzles forming letter shapes, match correct letters with audio sounds, and identify letters within words. In all, there are 175 sequenced reading lessons that help students develop such skills as letter recognition, spelling, and sentence construction.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program includes IBM's voice recognition technology (Viavoice), which means that students can practice saying letters and sentences and then hear the responses played back by the computer. This technology can prove useful to students with reading disabilities.

Tips: Although primarily phonics-based, *Let's Go Read's* producers note that the inclusion of elements of whole language instruction make this program a strong tool for well-balanced reading instruction. *Children's Software Revue* notes that after 10 or so letters (out of 26) "the sequences start to bore children." However, these same evaluators conclude, "all things considered, this [program] sets a new standard in the early reading category, and would be ideal for home or classroom settings."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*ConnSENSE Bulletin*, February 1999; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *Technology and Learning* Awards, 1998-99. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, January/February 1998.

Madeline Classroom Companion: 1st & 2nd Grade Reading Deluxe

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Creative Wonders/Learning Company

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Foreign Language

Cost: $34.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or PowerPC/33MHz, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **reading skills builder** features the popular character Madeline, of storybook and movie fame, as she hosts this two CD-ROM set. The CD-ROMs contain 16 specific activities that build upon word-sight recognition, phonics, reading comprehension, vocabulary, rhyming, and listening skills. Diary and Card activities allow students to write and create their own stories. This program also includes activities in French and Spanish that allow students to experiment with learning a new language. *Madeline* features three levels of difficulty and correct answers earn students stars and certificates of achievement. Special features of the program include a dictionary and progress checker.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators rave, "you can't go wrong with this solid program. The numerous activities are carefully designed (the publisher notes that *Madeline* was designed by educators to meet nationally recommended curriculum guidelines) and offer a nice range of content for kids with emerging reading skills." Binghamton (NY) City School District evaluators add that this program features "beautiful graphics" and conclude that "this is a wonderful program that holds students interest and is easy to use with minimal supervision." The publisher notes that each CD covers one whole year of reading development.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Binghamton (NY) City School District, October 1998; *Children's Software Revue*, November/December 1998; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999.

Reading Mansion

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Great Wave Software

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): PreK–2

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Phonics

Cost (School Edition): $49.95; Lab pack (5) $189.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive literacy adventure** sends children off on a scavenger hunt to 50 three-dimensional mansions. While exploring the mansions, students develop their reading and comprehension skills as they take part in activities that teach phonics (long, short, and R-controlled vowels), word skills (rhyming, plurals, and synonyms) and sentence mastery (arranging words and identifying incomplete sentences). As they attempt to find items on the scavenger hunt, children meet up with characters who give them hints and point them in the right direction. Once students find an item on their lists, they must complete an activity to take their prizes. As students succeed in completing the various activities, the difficulty level increases, making the program challenging even for the most advanced students. In all, *Reading Mansion* helps to teach children more than 2000 words and 25 different reading concepts. In addition to the teacher's manual, which contains lesson ideas and backline masters, this program also features a database that educators can use to monitor the progress of up to 50 students.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators write that the "strengths of this program include its many skill levels [which can be set automatically or manually] and its format. Our testers enjoyed hunting through each house for the missing items and would eagerly play the word games to obtain things on their [scavenger] list." Evaluators with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction add that this program, "offers strong support for early readers and their teachers in classroom or lab settings. Focused levels allow students to cycle through the prepared curricula."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Lesley College Instructional Computing Department, 1999; *Library Talk*, May/June 1999; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1999. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, September/October 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

Reading Who? Reading You!

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): K–2

Subject(s): Reading
Language Arts
Phonics

Cost: $59.95; Lab pack (5) $99.95; Lab pack (10) $179.95; Site license (25) $399.95; Site License (Unlimited) $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive reading package** helps to teach beginning literacy skills to young learners. Using phonics as its learning tool, the program introduces new words and pronunciations. Words are introduced by real kids in a video clip format. Next, students click on the particular word as it's heard within the context of a sentence. When students can correctly identify the word 80 percent of the time, then they can continue with the rest of the program. Other activities include Word Truck, where players can create phrases and sentences; Poems where they can read original age-appropriate poems; and Three Windows, a multiple-choice activity. As students complete these activities, their score is recorded so that the next time they sign on, the activity picks where they left off. Objectives of these activities include learning letter–sound correspondence, developing phonic awareness, building word lists and using these words in sentences, and using decoding skills in the context of original poetry.

Tips: Prince George's County (MD) Public School reviewers note that this program "can be used independently in the classroom, computer lab, and home to develop important skills that will help with the learning process."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Learning Magazine's* Teachers' Choice Awards, January/February 1998; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998.

Simon Sounds it Out

(CD-ROM: MAC)

Publisher:
Don Johnston, Inc.

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): K–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Phonics

Cost: $39; Lab pack (5) $137; Lab pack (10) $254; Site license (20) $429; Site license (50) $975

Hardware Requirements:
Macintosh System 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space; 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **drill-and-practice program** teaches students phonics and "phonological awareness" through a friendly and patient on-screen tutor named Simon. Simon instructs students on letter sounds and helps students to use these sounds to construct words. These words are then given context through their use in pictures and animations. Students are guided through five learning activities: initial sounds, word families, building complete words, spelling words, and reading words. Colorful graphics, sound, and animations entertain and encourage students as they complete the activities. The program features 31 levels based on different "word families" and allows students to move at their own pace. Teachers can track and record student progress.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program provides individualized lessons based on the user's need and skill level. Additionally, this program can be used with special keyboard and attachments for physically handicapped students.

Tips: Reviewers note that this program tracks the amount of time that students work on activities and makes instructional decisions based on this information to optimize learning and prevent frustration. Judges with the *Technology and Learning* Software Awards note that this would be an excellent product to use with young ESL students. A reviewer with *MultiMedia Schools* likes the Teacher Options Dialog, which allows teachers to enter student names, select starting levels for each student, and make other modifications. This reviewer concludes that, "while the program is clearly aimed at elementary students, *Simon Sounds it Out* could be used with anyone of any age who needs to learn the sounds and how to blend them."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *MultiMedia Schools*, January/February 1998. **Good**—*Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1997

Spell It Deluxe

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 3–6

Subject(s): Language Arts
Spelling
Reading

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: Children build on their existing spelling reading, and vocabulary skills in this **activity-based language arts program**. By seeing the words in the context of a sentence, students learn the spelling and meaning of the more than 4,000 words that are embedded within the five activities. While completing the activities, children not only develop their vocabulary and spelling skills but also learn how to apply editing skills after they identify errors. Six different levels of difficulty (from Junior to Grandmaster) help to ensure that students with varying spelling abilities are properly challenged. Teachers can also create their own spelling lists or even download new ones from the publisher's Web site. One interesting feature of this program is that students can work in pairs at the computer, studying the words and then taking a joint spelling test (with headphones).

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* note that its parent testers found the program useful in teaching their children to spell. However, *Children's Software Revue* also notes that *Spelling Blaster* (also produced by Knowledge Adventure) is a "more exciting alternative."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1997–98. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98.

STAR READING: A Computer-Adaptive Reading Test

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Advantage Learning Systems, Inc.

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): 1–12

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Teacher Helper

Cost: $399; Site license and network version available. Contact publisher for recent pricing information.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386 or faster, 4MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68020 or faster, 1.5MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space.

Intelligences:

Description: This **literacy assessment tool** helps teachers analyze the reading levels of their students. As new students join a school or classroom, they can be entered into the database, which collects short profiles on each individual. The student then takes the *STAR* test, which contains questions in a fill-in-the-blank format. As students present their answers, the questions continually adjust to each student's response pattern. *STAR Reading* is structured to produce norm-referenced scores that quickly (in about 10 minutes) and accurately report the reading grade level of individual students. The test results also provide percentile scores and students' instructional reading levels. Additionally, 11 detailed reports help to track student growth and communicate literacy gains with parents. Students can retake the test at a later date to measure their gains in reading. This program can be used independently or with the publisher's *Accelerated Reader* program. Accompanying the program are five copies of a teacher's guide, a technical manual, and information for test administrators. The program comes with varying levels of security and is password protected to ensure the confidentiality of students.

Application for Diverse Learners: Evaluators with the California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse note that this program would be useful in working with ESL students.

Tips: The publisher reports that the fast and accurate results allow educators to quickly place students in the right classes, with the right books, and the appropriate lesson plans.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99; *Learning Magazine's* Teacher's Choice Awards, 1999. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998.

That's a Fact, Jack!

(CD-ROM: MAC)

Publisher:
Learn Television, distributed by Follet Software Company

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 3–8

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Social Studies
Writing

Cost: $99 includes program disk plus one title; $349 deluxe kit includes program disk and choice of five titles.

Hardware Requirements:
Macintosh System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 30MB hard drive space 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors, sound card, mouse.

Intelligences:

Description: After students read classics such as *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *The Hobbit*, this **motivational literacy program** tests comprehension in a high-paced game show format. The light-hearted competition takes place either against the computer or with multiple live contestants and features an animated host who asks multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions. The questions cover a wide range of categories (literal, inferential, hypothetical, dialog, and writing technique) and the level of difficulty rises with the proportion of correct answers. Students are given up to three chances to "win" the game show. Teachers can control the number of questions, the time allotted to complete the program, and the number of points required to play in the bonus round. The starter kit comes with the program software plus 25 copies of one title (such as *The Hobbit*). Additional titles can be purchased for $99 (1-2 sets of books), $89 (3-4 sets), $79 (5-9 sets) and so on down to $50 for 51-60 sets. For an additional charge, the producer of this program offers Sidekeys, a device that allows students to answer questions from their desks as opposed to crowding around the computer.

Tips: A reviewer with *MultiMedia Schools* notes that "the game show format was very popular with our students and even led to a highly motivating rivalry between two of our classrooms." This reviewer also liked the teacher options that this program offers and called *That's a Fact, Jack* a "must buy!" Judges with the Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards note that this title is leading the charge as "the next generation of motivational reading and comprehension programs."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, March/April 1998; *Technology Connection*, November 1996. **Good**—Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1997.

World of Words

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
RES Software, LLC

Copyright: 1994

Grade(s): 8–12

Subject(s): Language Arts
Vocabulary
Student Helper

Cost: $69.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 4MB RAM (8MB recommended), 40MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers;
Macintosh System 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM (8MB recommended), 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive activity program** helps students develop their vocabulary skills as they prepare for entrance exams such as the PSAT and SAT. More than 1000 words from previous SATs are included within 75 "word families." Students build vocabulary skills by interacting with Luther, the program's teenage guide. Luther uses vocabulary culled from previous SATs in stories and illustrations about his favorite bands and musicians. Luther's stories combine text, graphics, and sound in ways that appeal to a variety of learning styles. Students are given the opportunity to create their own stories and images, which helps to reinforce vocabulary development in a meaningful context. Additionally, students can add new vocabulary words that relate to specific disciplines.

Applications for Diverse Learners: All vocabulary words are read in digitized speech, and program and self-initiated text are read in synthesized speech.

Tips: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluators suggest that this program is best suited to individual students for self-paced study to improve vocabulary. A *ConnSENSE Bulletin* evaluator notes that this program "stimulates thinking and increases memory retention" and concludes that "although *World of Words* is recommended for high school students, I believe that it is challenging enough for all ages and can benefit users from high school to adult. My only caution is that it's highly addictive!"

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*ConnSENSE Bulletin*, Vol. 10 No.1. **Good**—ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1997; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1996; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), Spring 1995.

Carmen Sandiego Math Detective

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Broderbund/Learning Company

Copyright: 1998

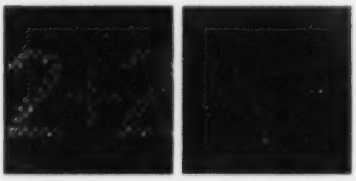
Grade(s): 3–7

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving
Social Studies

Cost (School Edition): $59.95; Lab pack (5) $179.95. A home version is available for $34.95.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 25MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** Power PC system, 16MB RAM, 25MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: Building on the popularity and strategies of previous Carmen titles (*Where in the World, Where in Time, and Word Detective*), this **multimedia math adventure program** features Carmen Sandiego up to her old tricks as she and her gang have captured 12 landmarks (such as the Great Wall of China) and natural wonders (such as Mount Everest) from around the world. Carmen has shrunk these world treasures into crystals that fit within the palm of her hand. It's up to students to use their math skills (multiplication, division, fractions and decimals, estimation, basic geometry, etc.) and problem-solving abilities to deactivate Carmen's Quantum Crystallizer and return these famous landmarks to their original condition. Special features include Practice Mode, which allows students to build their skills before taking on Carmen; On-Screen progress tracking, which reports students' performance in each of the activities; a glossary of math terms; and strategies for solving word problems.

Tips: The teacher's guide (which is included in the school edition) includes correlations to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards. This program includes a tutorial for both teachers and students. Teachers have the choice of customizing the content for the math activities and student rosters and can add or delete student accounts. This program includes Internet links (you will need a browser and Internet connection) to math, geography, and general research sites. Evaluators with Prince George's County (MD) public schools note that even though this is a drill and practice program, "students are intimately involved while compiling each mathematical equation," and they conclude, "students using this software will return with great anticipation."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—American Library Association's "Best" List, 1999; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1999; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1999; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99.

Fizz and Martina's Math Adventure
Blue Falls Elementary

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Tom Snyder Productions

Copyright: 1998

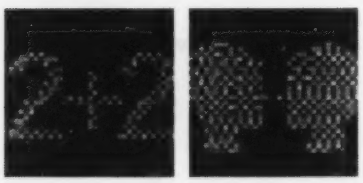
Grade(s): 3–5

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $79.95; Lab pack (5) $249.95; Lab pack (10) $449.95; Site license (20) $799.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB with WIN95), 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB with PowerPC), 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Working in groups, students apply their problem-solving skills in this context-driven **math discovery program**. In *Blue Falls Elementary*, students watch an animated story unfold in a video clip format. Next, students work in cooperative groups to solve the problems (in this program, Fizz and Martina try to find out who broke the elementary school's statue of Pinky McGee) that were presented in the video segment. Students then report out to the whole class, explaining the mathematical strategies that they used to answer the problems. The program offers optional follow-up activities and homework assignments for further study. *Blue Falls Elementary* was developed in accordance with the NCTM standards and covers mathematics as communication and mathematics as problem solving, as well as specific areas such as whole number operations, computation, estimation, and cooperative work. *Blue Falls Elementary* is part of Tom Snyder Productions, *Math Adventures* series, which also includes the titles *Buddies for Life* (grades 1–2), *Caves of Blue Falls* (grades 2–3), *Project Sphinx* (grades 4–5), and *Lights, Camera, Fractions* (grades 5–6). All of the programs follow the same format as *Blue Falls Elementary*.

Applications for Diverse Learners: Strong reading skills are not a prerequisite for this program because audio cues are offered throughout.

Tips: The included teacher's manual summarizes the video clips and the other contents of the program and also offers handouts and answer sheets. A *Library Talk* reviewer offers that teachers may want to thoroughly peruse this manual before beginning the program.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; *Library Talk*, November/December 1998. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

Fraction Attraction

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1996

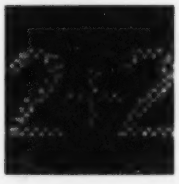
Grade(s): 3–8

Subject(s): Mathematics
Fractions

Cost: $69.95; Lab pack (5) $99.95; Site license (25) $179.95; Unlimited site license $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive skill and drill program** places students in a multimedia amusement park where they call on their developing math skills in four animated activities. Frac Track asks students to determine the winner of a horse race based on manipulation of fractions. Frac-O-Wheel has students work with adding and subtracting fractions to unload passengers from a ride. Fuzzy Fracs asks students to place fractions in a particular order to knock down game pieces. Whack-A-Frac reinforces fraction and decimal skills as students use a mallet to select yes or no answers. Overall, this program covers such math skills as ordering, equivalence, relative size, multiple representations, and locations of fractions on a number line. Each activity is fully customizable and features diagnostics to help students correct errors. Enclosed supplementary materials include a user's guide and blackline masters.

Tips: Prince George's County (MD) Public School evaluators note that the "analyze" button is a helpful tool for students because it helps to explain concepts when students choose an incorrect answer. A *Technology Connection* reviewer adds that this feature is "one of the strongest selling points of this software. . . . When students have questions about a math problem, they can use this feature for an analysis of the difficulties. Teachers will like this feature as they can have some students working independently while the teacher is instructing the rest of the class." Evaluators also note that music, graphics, and animation provide motivation for students in a sometimes difficult subject. This program is aligned with the NCTM framework of "understanding and use of numbers in a variety of equivalent forms."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology Connection*, April 1997. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1998–99; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction(*School Library Journal*), August 1997.

Hot Dog Stand: The Works

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1996

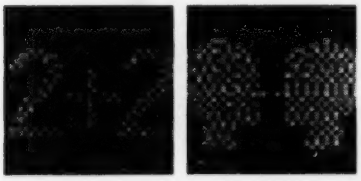
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving
Economics

Cost: $69.95; Lab pack (5) $99.95; Lab pack (10) $179.95; Site license (25) $399.95; Unlimited site license $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intlligences:



Description: This **multimedia simulation program** places students in the role of business person as they operate and manage their own hot dog stand. Students keep financial records, gather information, plan inventory, and decide on pricing strategies as they attempt to maintain a successful business. As students complete the activities, they build on their critical math, problem-solving, and communications skills. Specifically, students will be developing estimating, writing, graphing, and other skills. Three different levels of operation keep this program challenging to all students and the advanced levels contain random events, such as poor weather or machine failure, that make the program even more realistic.

Tips: Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators note that this program "reinforces the early childhood learner with addition, subtraction, and multiplication concepts, and it encourages cooperative learning groups." A *Technology Connection* reviewer adds that "the sound and graphics are excellent" and that the program loaded and ran easily. This reviewer also adds that the teacher options, which include setting goals and running reports on individual students, offers flexibility to the program and that the teacher's guide offers extension activities and ideas.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Alberta (Canada) Education, January 1998; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1998–99; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998. **Good**—*Technology Connection*, November 1997.

JumpStart Math for Kindergartners

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1998

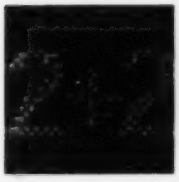
Grade(s): PreK–1

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving

Cost: $20

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.5 or later, PowerPC or faster, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 13" or larger color monitor, 4X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Young learners have the opportunity to develop their addition, subtraction, sorting, and numbering skills in this **interactive math adventure**. The story begins as Hopsalot the Rabbit takes students up the magic beanstalk to Cloudstown for a surprise party for Guthry Giant. As children complete 11 different math-based activities, they earn candles, which allow them to hide presents for the party. Once children gather 100 candles the party can begin. In all, the activities promote growth in math skills such as number writing, understanding sequences and patterns, making measurements, and problem-solving. As the children complete the activities, they can sing along with a number of different songs, collect magic beans, and help the cloud people prepare for the Giant's party. The program can be customized for difficulty level and also contains automatic tutoring for students who need extra help. A progress report provides tracking assistance that can be printed for documentation.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators note that the "activities are educationally sound and some, like the pattern making activity, are quite clever." However, these same evaluators note that eventually "kids tire of the format" and that there is too much noninterruptible narration and prompting.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*ConnSENSE Bulletin* May 1999; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1999. **Good**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, February 1999.

Mighty Math: Astro Algebra

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Edmark Corporation

Copyright: 1997

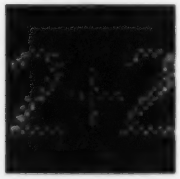
Grade(s): 6–9

Subject(s): Algebra
Mathematics
Graphing

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 9MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, SVGA monitor, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB for Power Mac), 9MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive mathematics adventure** places students aboard the Algebra Centauri Spaceship. As captains of this vessel, students travel through the galaxy meeting fascinating alien species and using algebra to help them out of predicaments. Crew members Skyler, Max, Mialee, and Tyric are on stand-by waiting to help you learn about and understand algebraic concepts such as one- and two-step equations, inequalities, and factoring. Students use the ship's tools to graph functions; work with exponents; and translate between fractions, decimals, and percents. Specific features include: Data Viewer, which contains numbers, tables, and facts to use for problem solving; Astronet, which simulates the Internet to review algebra topics; and Virtual Manipulatives, which helps students to better understand algebra and make connections between concrete and abstract concepts. This program contains 92 missions that students can tackle to improve their knowledge and understanding of algebra.

Tips: Reviewers at the Florida Department of Education note that this program "automatically adjusts to responses, keeps detailed records, and monitors progress. Teachers can choose missions for students, modify problems, and adjust difficulty levels." Reviewers with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction add that the "graphics and animation that create the illusion of being in outer space aboard a spacecraft are excellent, and abstract concepts come alive through the mission activities." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools reviewers conclude that this program "makes effective use of technology."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997-98; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1997. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1997; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1998.

Mystery Math Island

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Lawrence Productions

Copyright: 1995

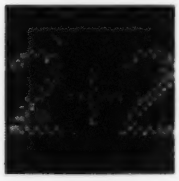
Grade(s): 3–8

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $69.95; Lab pack (5) $149.95; Site license $699

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486DX or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive math adventure** sends students to an exotic island in search of buried treasure. Calling upon their mathematical skills, students answer questions based on geometry, measurement, patterns, problem-solving, and operations. Correct answers earn students gold, which allows them to buy tools to dig up the buried treasure. Incorrect answers or taking too much time to find the buried treasure leads to the return of a band of pirates who have come back to the island to lay claim to their treasures. Upon completion of the program, students can print out a certificate of accomplishment.

Tips: The content of *Mystery Math Island* has been crafted around the NCTM standards. There are three difficulty levels in this program so students from grade 3 to grade 8 should feel challenged (although an evaluator with *Technology Connection* note that older students may "feel themselves too sophisticated to chase after treasure and pirates"). Teachers can monitor student progress on either the whole program or individual questions.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1996. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1997; *Technology Connection*, October 1996.

An Odyssey of Discovery: Exploring Numbers 1.0

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Pierian Spring Software

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 4–8

Subject(s): Mathematics

Cost (School Edition): $59; Lab pack (5) $199; Lab pack (10) $299; Site license (30) $499. A home version is available for $39.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later (WIN95 recommended), 486DX/66 MHz, 8MB RAM (16MB for WIN95), 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later (PowerMac recommended) 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive skill-building program** covers a variety of important mathematical concepts. Students enter the program through the virtual learning hall that houses the five main modules. Specific activities within the modules include Classifier, in which students define the five classifications of real numbers; Rational/Power Reader, which asks students to master scientific notation and manipulate square roots, bases, and exponents; Prime Encoder, where students identify the prime numbers up to 100 and encode/decode secret messages using what they have learned about primes; Mystic Sorter, which uses money to illustrate the importance of integers and decimals; and Operation Zap, where students learn the order of operations as they solve problems with increasing numbers of operators. Additional features of this program include 3-D graphics, adjustable difficulty levels, a picture glossary, and a narrated overview.

Tips: A teacher's guide (included in the school edition) helps educators create lesson plans based on this program and also points out correlations with the NCTM standards. Evaluators with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction note that this program would be an excellent "introductory tool for whole class instruction or small group use. It also would be appropriate for remediation and reinforcement with students being directed to specific activities as needed."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99; Binghamton (NY) City School District, June 1998. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1999.

PrimeTime Math: Fire!

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Tom Snyder Productions

Copyright: 1997

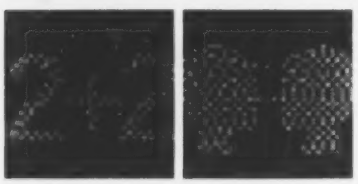
Grade(s): 7–9

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $79.95; Lab pack (5) $199.95; Lab pack (10) $299.95; Site license (20) $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or faster, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Students apply their mathematical knowledge to a real-world situation in this **problem-solving adventure**. Using formulas, measurements, understandings of triangles and algebraic concepts, students work in cooperative groups to help firefighters in a burning building. In Act One, students watch full-motion video of actual firefighters to gain a realistic understanding of a fire at a burning building. Act Two continues the scenario as the firefighters search the building and find an unconscious victim. Using the provided Info Sheets, students record information that they will later need to complete mathematical calculations. After gathering all of the information and working on the problems separately, students form groups to solve various questions (such as the quickest escape route). The last act of the program shows the firefighters enacting solutions to the various problems presented. The included teacher's guide contains suggestions for activities and lesson plans based around the program. This program is correlated with the NCTM standards.

Tips: Evaluators with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction feel that "students will be highly motivated by the dramatic, real-life video." Evaluators with the Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools add that this program inspires desirable student-student interaction and is very easy for teachers to use. Our evaluators warn that teachers should expect to use from three to five class periods to fully explore the program.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Fermilab Lederman Science Center, 1997; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1999; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1998; Software and Information Industry Associations' Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1998.

Tenth Planet Explores Math: Mirror Symmetry

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Tenth Planet/Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1996

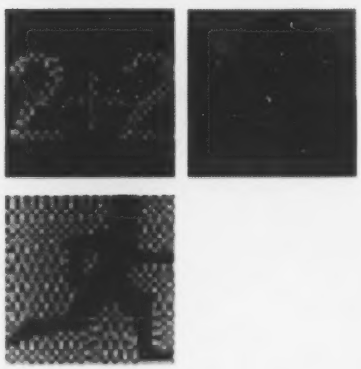
Grade(s): 2–5

Subject(s): Mathematics
Geometry
Social Studies
Language Arts
Arts

Cost (School Edition): $79; Lab pack (5) $149; Site License (25) $499

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 14MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 14MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **geometric investigation program** illustrates for students the uses and beauty of symmetry in nature and in cultures around the world. Using a variety of multimedia and hands-on activities to motivate interaction with the program, *Mirror Symmetry* helps students identify and describe objects that display symmetry, create objects and designs that are symmetrical, use number and pattern to predict results of mirror reflection, and explain the relationship between the original and total number of reflected objects. As students go through the program and complete the activities, they develop further understanding of mathematical concepts such as estimation, fractions, decimals, and measurement. The interdisciplinary nature of this program also helps students learn art concepts (through the creation of symmetrical kites), language arts skills (through journal writing activities), social studies awareness (through the creation of African kites), and architecture (through the study and building of symmetrical objects). A teacher's guide provides ideas for activities and assessment, blackline masters, and information on customizing the program for classes or for individual learners.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program is also available in a Spanish version and language support is provided on screen. Language support is also provided in the teacher's guide and through the included letters to parents.

Tips: In ranking this program a "must buy!" a *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator notes that "this is not a skill and drill package. The focus here is upon learning through student investigation and activity and upon the teacher's role as mentor and learning partner." This program is one of six in Tenth Planet's *Geometry Investigations Series* (see also *Shapes Within Shapes* on page 38 of this year's *Only the Best*). All of the *Geometry Investigations Series* titles are aligned to the NCTM standards.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; *MultiMedia Schools*, May/June 1997. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998.

Tenth Planet Explores Math: Shapes Within Shapes

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Tenth Planet/Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1997

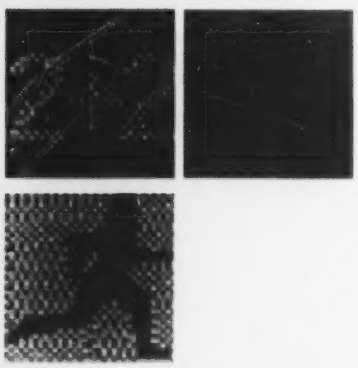
Grade(s): 2–5

Subject(s): Mathematics
Geometry
Social Studies
Language Arts
Arts

Cost (School Edition): $79; Lab pack (5) $149; Site License (25) $499

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 14MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 14MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **geometric investigation program** helps students build their understanding of spatial relationships by working with shapes and patterns in real-world objects such as quilts and in art traditions such as origami. Using a variety of multimedia and hands-on activities to motivate interaction with the program, *Shapes Within Shapes* encourages students to learn how to identify shapes, describe and use numbers to classify the shapes within a shape, create shapes that tessellate by cutting and rearranging them, and compose and decompose shapes to examine their properties. As students go through the program and complete the activities, they develop an improved understanding of mathematical concepts such as decimals, estimation, measurement, and patterning. The interdisciplinary nature of this program encourages students to also learn about world cultures and art through the study of origami and develop language arts skills through the extensive use of a student journal. A teacher's guide provides ideas for activities and assessment, blackline masters, and information on customizing the program for classes or for individual learners.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program is also available in a Spanish version and language support is provided on screen. Language support is also provided in the teacher's guide and through the included letters to parents.

Tips: In ranking this program a "must buy," a *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator notes that "this is not a skill and drill package. The focus here is upon learning through student investigation and activity and upon the teacher's role as mentor and learning partner." This program is one of six in Tenth Planet's *Geometry Investigations Series* (see also *Mirror Symmetry* on page 37 of this year's *Only the Best*). All of the *Geometry Investigations Series* titles are aligned to the NCTM standards.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; *MultiMedia Schools*, May/June 1997. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998.

Windows on Math: Volume 1

(VIDEODISC, Optional CD-ROM)

Publisher:
Optical Data Corporation

Copyright: 1995

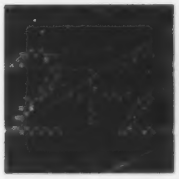
Grade(s): 1–2

Subject(s): Mathematics
Addition
Subtraction
Measurement
Problem Solving

Cost: $945

Hardware Requirements:
Requires a TV/monitor with a laserdisc player. A multimedia Windows or Macintosh computer is needed for the supplementary CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **mathematical skills development program** is one volume of a five part series that uses videodisc technology to bring topics such as arithmetic, geometry, and problem-solving to life. Each of the five volumes includes video, animation, and still images that help to illustrate the real-world importance of math skills. Each of the volumes explores a full year's mathematics curriculum, emphasizing skill development and problem-solving abilities. Specifically, Volume 1 (for 1st graders) addresses such concepts as numeration, addition, exploration of shapes, and measurement. Some of the activities are titled Investigating Numbers in Our Lives, Exploring Length and Capacity, and Exploring Numeration to 100. A teacher's guide, student activity recording book, and blackline masters are included with the videodisc.

Applications for Diverse Learners: The audio tracks and student materials are also available in Spanish. Contact the publisher for more information.

Tips: This program was designed with national, state and district standards in mind. Teachers or administrators can download the correlations that Optical Data has identified by visiting their Web site (www.opticaldata.com). Evaluators with the California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse note that in addition to the correlation with standards, this program also "stimulates critical thinking and facilitates the integration of mathematics with social science, language arts, science, health, and the fine arts." *MultiMedia Schools* evaluators recommend this program, stating that it would be make an "excellent supplemental material."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; *MultiMedia Schools,* November/December 1995.

Big Thinkers 1st Grade

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Humongous Entertainment

Copyright: 1997

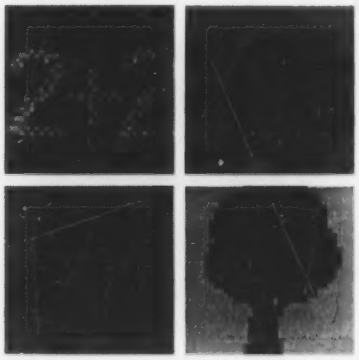
Grade(s): 1–2

Subject(s): Language Arts
Spelling
Reading
Mathematics
Addition
Subtraction
Fractions
Geography
Science

Cost: $19.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 5MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive activity program** helps students work on the fundamentals of early learning, specifically math and reading. This program is part of the *Big Thinkers* series available from Humongous (each of the *Big Thinkers* titles teach skills in five subject areas: math, language arts, sciences, creative arts, and thinking skills). In the *Big Thinkers 1st Grade*, the Brightly Twins, Ben and Becky, lead children through six locations (four rooms, the garage, and the backyard) so they can complete 20 activities that focus on developing specific skills such as understanding nouns and verbs, comprehending geography and directions, and learning about fractions. As children explore this program and complete the activities, they gain SmartStars, which can be used in a culminating game called Smarts Challenge, that tests their problem-solving skills. This program is aligned with national curriculum standards.

Tips: The activities within this program are available in three difficulty levels with the highest level challenging students on the 1st grade level. *USA Today* reviewers write that "parents know a computer game is a hit when their children clap for themselves after they accomplish a feat, giggle out loud and won't stop playing despite offers of milk and cookies. Such is the case with Big Thinkers First Grade." However, these same reviewers warn that the "language portion of this game is probably too challenging for most 1st graders . . . and there's another portion on fractions that's probably also too advanced for most kids at this age."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *Library Talk*, September/October 1998.

The ClueFinders 3rd Grade Adventures

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1997

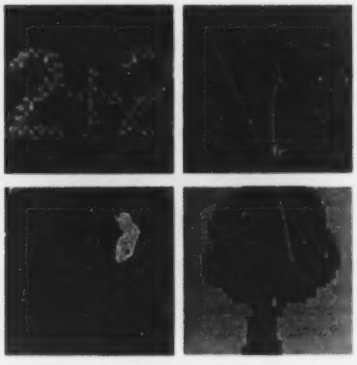
Grade(s): 2–3

Subject(s): Mathematics
Language Arts
Science
Geography
Logic

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 12MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 16MB RAM, 12MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **multidisciplinary adventure program** sends students off to the Numerian Rain Forest with their tour guides, Santiago and Joni. Along the way, students encounter 20 educational activities with four levels of difficulty that help to build on their mathematic, language arts, science, geography, and logical reasoning skills. Examples of these activities include using their mathematics skills to figure out how to balance a log on a bridge, measuring the circumference of a dangerous pit in order to rope it off, and using map skills to help birds find their way home. *ClueFinders* is presented in an open-ended style, which means that students can follow one of many paths through the rain forest and that no one adventure is repeated. Reports detailing student progress are readily available for teachers and parents.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* exclaims, "this engaging learning adventure is one of the best we've seen to date. . . . The activities are all very well designed, and are nicely focused on 'real' applications of math and reading." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators add, "the educational focus area of this program is wonderful. . . . With the four major divisions to the program it is easy to connect lesson objectives." These evaluators also note that "with no two adventures being the same, this program motivates the student to draw conclusions, make inferences and develop sequence."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, January/February 1998; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998.

JumpStart Kindergarten

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1994, 1998

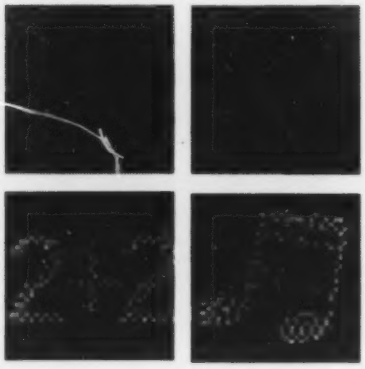
Grade(s): PreK–1

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Mathematics

Cost: $19.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 color, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 10MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 256 colors, 13" inch or larger monitor.

Intelligences:



Description: Hopalot the Rabbit acts as host of this program as children tour a virtual classroom filled with numerous learning activities that build on a range of **kindergarten readiness skills**. The activities include Garden, in which students add up vegetables to fill up a basket; the Puzzle Game, in which children match pictures and words; and Jungle Gym, where students practice their phonics skills. As students complete these activities, they are awarded points that can then be used at the Petting Zoo. Overall, this program aims to cover a full year of pre-reading, early math, language, and creative arts.

Tips: This program is an updated version of the 1994 release and includes additional activities, improved graphics, and a stronger emphasis on phonics. The *JumpStart Kindergarten* series also includes *Math for Kindergartners* and *Reading for Kindergartners*. The three titles can be purchased separately or together as part of the *Kindergarten Collection* ($44.95).

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, February/March 1995. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology and Learning* SoftwareAwards, 1995; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1997.

JumpStart 2nd Grade

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1996

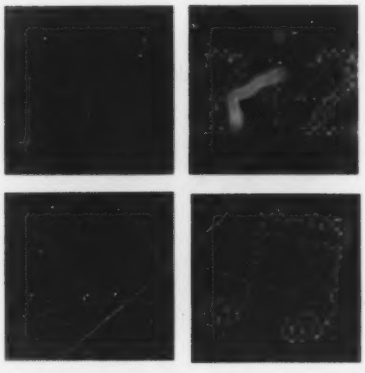
Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s):
Language Arts
Writing
Reading
Grammar
Sign Language
Mathematics
Geography
Music

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 9MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive adventure program** teaches a variety of skills as students make their way through 22 activities. Following CJ the Frog and his sidekick, Edison, students learn the basics of American Sign Language, answer math problems to move a football across a football field, record and play back tunes using a small recorder, and practice their money skills by putting the correct change into a jukebox to hear a song. Specifically, students will develop skills such as addition, multiplication, subtraction, writing, and basic grammar. Students also have the opportunity to learn about musical scales, U.S. geography, and the solar system. The activities are accessed from the clubhouse, classroom, or elevator, and are based on three levels of difficulty. A printable progress report shows areas of strength and weakness.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators note that "overall the activities did an excellent job at getting kids to fine tune their spelling, math, and logic skills" and conclude, that the "wide range of activities combined with the program's ability to keep track of children's progress make it well worth the purchase." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools reviewers like this program's motivational abilities, noting that the animation, songs, and on-screen prizes inspire students to keep going.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, April/May 1996; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998

My Personal Tutor: Preschool-Grade 1

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright: 1997

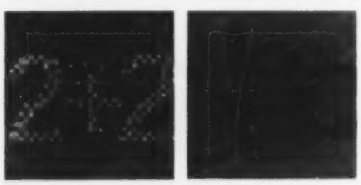
Grade(s): PreK–1

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Mathematics

Cost: $34.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (12MB for Windows NT), 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers.

Intelligences:



Description: Children can get a head start on developing their reading and mathematics skills in this **multidisciplinary activity program**. With the help of their personal tutor Professor Presto, students are engaged in activities through a variety of songs, games, and activities centered around the program's four CD-ROMs: Preschool Workshop, features early reading and math skill drills; Alphabet Workshop, helps students develop their reading abilities; Reader Railway, covers vocabulary, reading comprehension, and word creation; and Mathopolis is available for students who are ready to take their math skills to the next level. *My Personal Tutor* comes with a Learning Activity Guide, that teachers or parents can use to extend the activities of the program and a Read With Me coloring book that students can use for learning experience away from the computer. As the title implies, this program is adapted to the needs of the individual learner and personalized instruction is always available through Professor Presto or the more than 100 multimedia tutorials.

Tips: While their overall impression of the program is positive, evaluators with *Children's Software Revue* warn that the product suffers from "non-interruptible instructions, excessive prompting, and in some spots, dry presentations." In highly recommending this program, a reviewer with *Technology Connection* calls *My Personal Tutor* a "good way for students to learn their ABCs and sounds" and note that this program's "fun visuals and sounds capture children's imaginations and learning occurs."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1998; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99; *Technology Connection*, February 1998. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, November/December 1997.

Reader Rabbit's 1st Grade

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1998

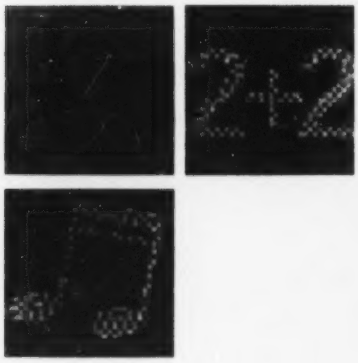
Grade(s): K–1

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Spelling
Mathematics
Addition
Music

Cost: $19.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 11MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 11MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Featuring 12 different learning tasks, this **multidisciplinary activity program** challenges young learners to work with Reader Rabbit to save the Wordville musical show. The activities are arranged in four different areas of Wordville: Professor Owl's Tree House, where students build their spelling and reading comprehension skills; Papa Bear's Store, where students count coins and correctly order the days of the week; Pierre's Studio, where children paint a billboard and build their musical skills; and Bab's Workshop, where students practice their estimation and measurement skills. The ultimate goal of the program is for children to collect all 48 items and to watch the musical come to life.

Tips: An evaluator with *Library Talk* writes, "I would strongly recommend *Reader Rabbit's 1st Grade*. It is a quality program that covers several important skills [and] it offers great skill-building features in a single program at a very affordable price." *Children's Software Revue* adds that "the activities are solid educationally, entertaining, and the held the interest of our testers."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, March/April 1998; *Library Talk*, November/December 1998.

Making Music

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher: Voyager c/o Forest Technologies

Copyright: 1995

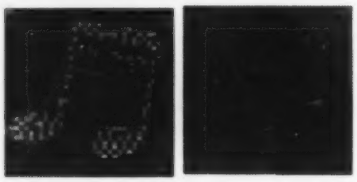
Grade(s): K–5

Subject(s): Music
Creativity

Cost: $39.95; Lab pack (5) $139.95

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 5MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: The creation of famed music synthesizer and electronic composer Morton Subotnick, this **interactive simulation program** allows children with no musical training to experiment with their own composing. *Making Music* presents elements of composing—such as scales, harmony, and melody in a visual and aural format that allows students to approach their musical creation in a variety of ways. Students can choose among 16 instruments to create their music. This program's features include Composition Space, in which students use a paint brush to create notes on the screen and vary the volume and tempo of their "tune"; Melody and Rhythm Maker, which lets students alter pitch and rhythm; Building Blocks, which helps students learn about structure and repetition; Flip Book in which three elements of musical composition—melody, rhythm, and instrumentation are combined into a musical book; and Games, in which students' compositions are listened to either on the novice or maestro level.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program is accessible to students who have limited reading abilities.

Tips: *Technology Connection* reviewers note that although this program "was created for elementary students, it is worthwhile for any age. We tested it with high school students in a music theory class. They commented that seeing and hearing the compositions helped them understand musical elements related to rhythm, melody, and instrumentation." These reviewers add that "watching the music as it is played helps students visualize a composition and begin to become aware of what is modified when the elements changed."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1996–97; *Technology Connection*, September 1996.

Music Ace

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Harmonic Vision

Copyright: 1996

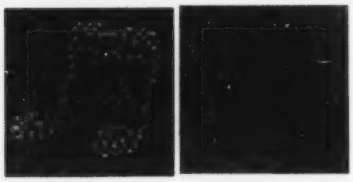
Grade(s): 3–12

Subject(s): Music
Creativity

Cost (School Edition): $79.95; Lab packs, site licenses, and a home version of this product are also available. Please contact publisher for most recent pricing information.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386/25MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68030 or faster, 5MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Students can develop an understanding of the basic elements of music theory and attentive listening in this **multimedia lesson-based program.** Under the care of an Maestro Max, an animated character, students go at their own pace through 24 comprehensive lessons featuring engaging activities and games. Each of the lessons covers a different element of music composition, such as pitch identification, note reading, octaves, keyboard basics, listening skills, and whole and half steps. The lessons culminate in a gaming activity that helps students sharpen their music skills and improve their retention of the lesson concepts. A unique feature of this program is the Music Doodle Pad, which allows students to compose their own music using a variety of different instruments. Students can also listen to and alter the classical and popular music selections from the Jukebox. *Music Ace* offers teachers the ability to track the progress of individual learners, and a "completion count" provides the number of times the user has gone through each section of a lesson.

Tips: An evaluator with *TechTrends* notes that "the best thing about *Music Ace* is the amount of interactivity the program offers to the learner. I was completely taken in by Maestro Max and the feedback that he gave throughout the lessons." A *Technology Connection* evaluator adds, "this award-winning software is an excellent introduction to basics for students of vocal or instrumental music." A free demo of this program is available at the publisher's Web site <http://www.harmonicvision.com>.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools 1997–98; *TechTrends*, January/February 1997. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology Connection*, December 1997.

Adventures of Batman and Robin Activity Center

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Gryphon Software Corporation

Copyright: 1996

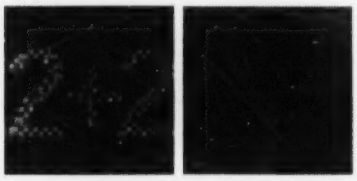
Grade(s): K–6

Subject(s): Problem Solving
Mathematics

Cost: $49.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, SVGA monitor, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, Performa 550 or better or Power Macintosh, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" inch monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive problem-solving** adventure is based on the hit TV series from Warner Brothers Animation. With this program, students ages 5–11 will develop and use mathematical, critical-thinking, and problem- solving skills to help Batman and Robin rid Gotham City of evil villains like Mr. Freeze, the Joker, the Penguin, and many more. Different sections of the Activity Center include the Batcave, Wayne Manor, and Gotham City. Each section features puzzles, memory teases, mazes, and matching games. Students enter information into the Batcomputer which analyses the clues and leads to the secret hideouts of Gotham City's villains. Three levels of difficulty are available and can be adjusted for each individual activity. The activities change and become more difficult with repeated play.

Tips: Evaluators at *Children's Software Revue* note that this program has many activities that "are adept at getting kids to think logically." Additionally, these reviewers note that all three of their test families enjoyed the program and reported that they would buy it. Evaluators with Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools conclude that this program "uses critical thinking skills in an exciting and fun-filled manner. Students will be motivated to solve puzzles, codes, and mazes."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, April/May 1997; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998.

CCCNet

(Subscription-based Web service—http://www.cccnet.com/)

Publisher:
Computer Curriculum Corporation

Copyright: 1997

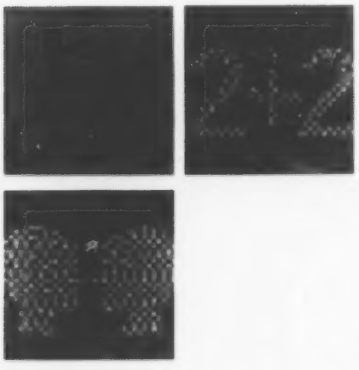
Grade(s): K–8

Subject(s): Reference
Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies

Cost: $195/year for one teacher license; $1495/year for ten teacher licenses.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, Web browser (Netscape or Explorer 3.0 or later), 16MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, modem and ISP; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, Web browser (Netscape or Explorer 3.0 or later), 16MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, modem, and ISP.

Intelligences:



Description: This **collaborative Internet-based program** offers K–8 curriculum extensions in math, science, reading, and social studies that enhance classroom learning. Students can participate in scheduled online projects such as Your Civil Rights, 30th Anniversary of the First Moonwalk, and School Around the World. For example, in I-press, teachers, professional journalists, and students in schools nationwide gather online to learn about the fundamentals of journalism and create a Web-based newspaper. Some features unique to CCCNet include access to online experts that can answer student questions and collaborate on these projects, space for students to publish their work or for other students to see and reference, and a guide for students in using the vast resources of the Internet for research and learning. All of CCCNet's content is directly correlated to national and state standards.

Tips: Judges with *Technology and Learning*'s software awards state, "CCCNet offerings are wonderful models for what is possible when Internet capabilities are carefully harnessed to open up the world for students." These judges were also impressed with the "thoroughly researched and intelligently assembled projects, which allow students to participate in live, authentic projects, receive global feedback, and communicate with experts and peers from different worlds."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education; 1997–98; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1997. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998.

Thinkin' Things Sky Island Mysteries

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Edmark Corporation

Copyright: 1998

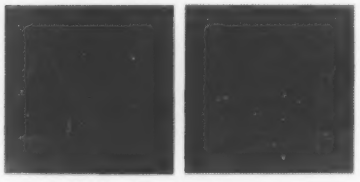
Grade(s): 3–6

Subject(s): Problem Solving
Language Arts

Cost (School Edition): $59.95; A home version is available for $29.95.

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 7MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB for PowerPC), 2MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **activity-based program** challenges children's problem-solving and decision-making skills in a fun and interactive format. Using their logic, communication, prioritization, and critical-thinking abilities, students attempt to solve the mysteries presented throughout the program. In all, 14 mysteries challenge the students as they attempt to save Sky Island from a band of villains. To find clues that identify the villains threatening Sky Island, students must visit three other islands and complete various multilevel activities. Airshow Island asks students to use their planning and spatial skills to coordinate airplane stunts for a cheering crowd; Rebus Island features riddles and puzzles for students to decode; and Stadium Island asks students to fill the stands with Fripples (animated creatures) and have the Fripples perform acrobatic routines. As students progress through the program, they gather clues that include information (personality, hobbies, and life styles) describing the villain. Students compile these clues and match them to a file of 3,000 suspects. Successful gathering and analyzing of the clues eventually narrows down the field of suspects and leads students to identify the culprit.

Tips: The teacher's guide includes the CD-ROM along with a 3-ring binder containing steps for getting started with the program, a Learning Opportunities Matrix (highlighting key curriculum goals), and ideas for cross-curricular activities.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99.

The Complete National Geographic

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
National Geographic/Mindscape

Copyright: 1997

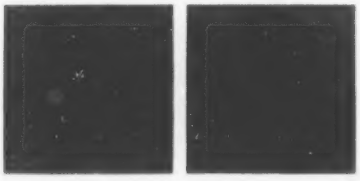
Grade(s): 4–12

Subject(s): Reference
Social Studies
Geography
History

Cost: $179.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486DX/33 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM (8MB for Windows 3.1), 32MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, optional Internet access for online resource center; **Macintosh** System 7.5 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 32MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors, optional Internet access for online resource center.

Intelligences:



Description: This comprehensive **reference tool** contains every article, advertisement, map, and magazine cover that appeared in *National Geographic* from 1888 through 1996. Students will find articles (more than 9,300 in all) written by eyewitnesses, maps that represent the changing landscape of the world, and pictures and illustrations (more than 180,000) that capture beauty, tragedy, triumph, and defeat. The CD-ROMs are separated into decades, and each has its own comprehensive index, which makes it easy to search for particular articles or photographs. Students can also search the entire CD-ROM collection from any of the individual CDs. In addition to the comprehensive CD-ROM set, users have access to an online resource center, collector's corner, and National Geographic community area.

Tips: Florida Department of Education evaluators note that with this program, "searches can be set for a particular magazine issue or a range of issues, and also by article, feature, page reference, advertisement, or a combination of these. Search matches list article titles, dates, and pages . . . and target words are highlighted in the article." These evaluators also note that text and pictures can be captured and exported to other documents such as research papers. *Library Talk* reviewers add, "the quality of on-screen material is excellent . . .. The zoom feature will enlarge the image, and users can rotate a sideways image." *MultiMedia Schools* evaluators add that this program is easy to navigate, comes with attentive product support, and is an "excellent resource [that] will be useful for both teachers and students in the school setting as they prepare and present lessons and reports, and the general public will find it fascinating and educational."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *MultiMedia Schools*, September/October 1998. **Good**—*Library Talk*, September/October 1998.

Encarta Africana

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright: 1998

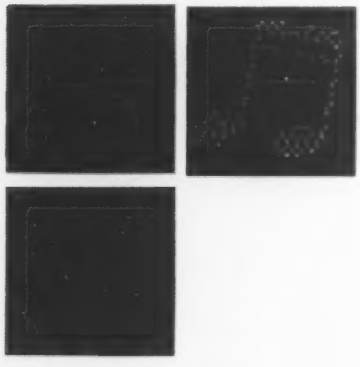
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
World History
U.S. History
Reference

Cost: $49.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486DX/66 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM (24MB for Windows 98 or NT), 30MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 1MB video memory, sound card and speakers. Connection to Web links requires a 9600 bps or faster modem and Internet access.

Intelligences:



Description: This **historical reference program** details the history and culture of people of African descent through more than 3,000 articles; 2,000 maps, photos and charts; six video travelougues of historic sites; and six virtual tours that use the latest in 360-degree photography. Topics range from musical contributions in the United States to the geography of Ghana to the current economic status of Africa. The video section, Africana on Camera, contains clips from well-known personalities such as Maya Angelou, Kofi Annan and Cornel West. Other features include a video tour that allows students to visit Africa through rare footage shot by PBS; Time line that acts as a representation of world history as it relates to Africa; and two interactive maps, one that focuses on Africa and its political, scientific, and agricultural information, and one that focuses on the slave trade between Africa and the Americas. This program includes Microsoft's Research Organizer, which is a tool that helps students collect and organize information for reports and general reference.

Applications for Diverse Learners: A read-aloud function allows the user to hear the text of more than 3,000 articles.

Tips: Evaluators with *Children's Software Revue* rave about *Encarta Africana*, stating that "this is a must-have program for every school and library and will nicely compliment a home software library as well." These evaluators add that the makers of this program "have gone out of their way to make it useful for students and teachers." *MultiMedia Schools* evaluators agree noting that there are "few resources that compile such a variety of scholarly materials and engage students in an interactive manner" and conclude that "this program will soon join the other Encarta products as standard library reference materials."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, March/April 1999; *MultiMedia Schools*, March/April 1999. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1999.

Encarta Reference Suite 1999

(CD-ROM: WIN or DVD: WIN)

Publisher:
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright: 1998

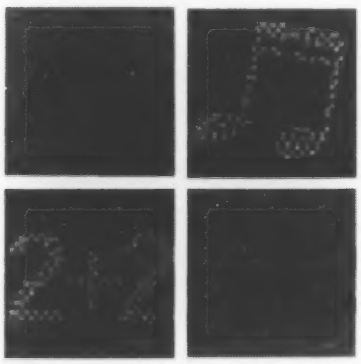
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s):
Reference
Social Studies
Geography
Language Arts
Mathematics
Arts
Science

Cost: $99.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 75MHz or faster, 16MB RAM (24MB for Windows NT sytems), 118MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers. Internet access option requires a modem and Internet service provider.

Intelligences:



Description: This **multimedia reference suite** brings together three individual Microsoft titles—*Encarta, Microsoft Bookshelf,* and *Encarta Virtual Globe* (see page 80)—in either a five CD or one DVD set. *Encarta Deluxe*, the encyclopedia component of this set, features thousands of new articles, pictures, and video clips that are indexed and cross-linked for easy searching and navigation. *Microsoft Bookshelf* contains nine complete reference books, such as the *American Heritage Dictionary, Roget's Thesaurus, Columbia Dictionary of Quotations,* and *The World Almanac and Book of Facts*. *Virtual Globe* is a multimedia geographic reference whose 10,000 articles, images, maps, and sounds present information on every corner of the globe. Another feature of the reference suite that educators might find useful is the *Encarta Lesson Collection,* which offers more than 700 teacher-created and -tested lesson plans for grades K–12 arranged around 12 curriculum areas.

Applications for Diverse Learners: This reference suite features *Encarta Voice Command and Control,* which allows students to navigate through the product using only voice commands. Additionally, this product supports text-to-speech and close captioning for the hearing impaired.

Tips: The reviewer with *Book Report* recommends this product, stating "*Reference Suite 99* still sets the standard for all electronic encyclopedias and reference tools. It is an indispensable tool for students and writers." On a practical note, this reviewer mentions that although the CD-ROM version comes with five discs, the graphical interface is the same with all of the programs and so searching and navigating is easy. These products offer Internet links for further research. All three components of this suite are also available for sale as individual units. *Editors Note*: this suite and all three of its components are updated on an annual basis. Please contact publisher for release dates of updated editions.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—American Library Association's "Best" List, 1999; Developmental Software Awards, 1999; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999. **Good**—*Book Report,* May/June 1999.

Encyclopædia Britannica on CD-ROM

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Encylopædia Britannica

Copyright: 1997, 1998

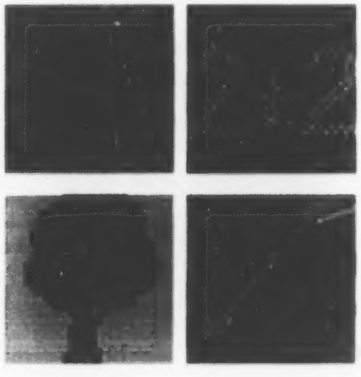
Grade(s): 6–12

Subject(s): Reference
Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies

Cost: $119

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 75 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 80MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors, windows-compatible sound, mouse. Internet access option requires a modem and Internet service provider.

Intelligences:



Description: This two-CD-ROM **searchable reference program** brings the famous encyclopedia to life in a multimedia format. The newest edition contains the entire text (73,000 articles) of the 32-volume print version; more than 1.5 million hypertext links; 30,000 related Internet links, 9,000 photos and images; 1,200 maps; and sound and animation files. Specific features of this CD-ROM set include Content Analyst, which allows users to compare countries or regions of the world; an interactive time line that shows how events in entertainment, the arts, and sports interact with major political and social incidents; and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (10th edition).

Tips: The materials from *Encyclopædia Britannica* are also available in a single CD "standard" version (text and pictures but no movies, Web links, or other high-end media–$59), in a DVD format ($129), and on the Internet ($50 per year). Updates to the CD-ROM are done on an annual basis. A reviewer with the *Book Report* says that the best part of the program is the link to the Internet, which offers resources for further study. However, this reviewer notes that "it is possible to get lost on the Internet after *Encyclopædoa Britannica* sends you to a remote site with little warning that you have left the program." Still, *Book Report* highly recommends this program, noting that "this is an excellent product for middle and high schools without networks or for home use. If you are networked (online), check out Britannica Online."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Book Report*, September/October 1998; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the CODIES), 1999.

Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Grolier Publishing

Copyright: 1998

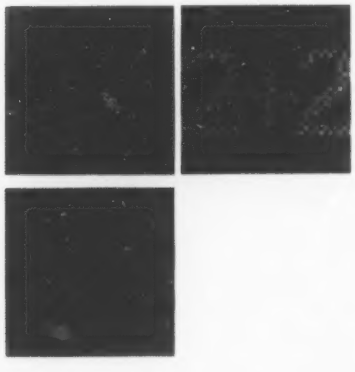
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Reference
Social Studies
U.S. History
World History
Science
Mathematics

Cost: $59.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB for Win95, 98, or NT), 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, Quicktime (supplied with product); **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68030 or later, 8MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, QuickTime (supplied with product).

Intelligences:



Description: This **multimedia encyclopedic program** has been updated for this 1999 version, which now features more than 36,000 articles, 15,000 images, 1,200 maps, 150 videos and animations, and 15 hours of sound. The latest in CD-ROM technology is evident on this disk in the form of 360-degree panoramas of such historic landmarks as the Great Wall of China, Easter Island, the South Pole, the Colosseum, and even Dodger Stadium. In all, more than 100 panoramic virtual field trips are available, complete with informative captions and links to related articles. Other features of this program include Timeline, which helps put the history included on this CD-ROM in perspective; Yearbook, which provides overviews of a particular year's achievements; and Atlas, which contains more than 400 maps and pictures. Further research is available to the user through the Online Knowledge Explorer, which offers "the best of the Web" in an integrated Grolier Internet Index. All of the articles are cross-linked to related resources to provide for an integrated learning experience.

Tips: *Booklist* evaluators call this program a "reliable, current, and fun resource for schools and libraries that serve students from the middle grades through adult patrons." *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* is available as a stand-alone product or as part of *Grolier's Multimedia Reference Suite* which also includes an atlas, an almanac, a book of quotations and extended multimedia files. Contact publisher for pricing information.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98. **Good**—*Book Report*, May/June 1999; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999.

Animals in Danger

(CD-ROM: MAC,WIN)

Publisher:
REMedia

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): 3–12

Subject(s):
Science
Zoology
Biology
Ecology
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $39.95; A home version is available for $29.95.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB recommended with Windows 95), 4X CD-ROM, sound card with speakers; **Macintosh** PowerPC compatible, 68030 processor or faster, 8MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This **habitat-centered zoology program** provides an in-depth look at endangered animals and discusses how the further destruction of fragile ecosystems threatens many other species. *Animals in Danger* uses narrated videos, animation, photography, and interviews with experts to explore the issue of extinction in 11 different habitats in the United States and around the world. An interactive component contains topics for debate, a database for researching specific animals, quizzes, and suggestions for class projects using the Internet. A map section provides an overview of the world's major biomes and discusses their specific features and wildlife. The program is narrated by Norman Gershenz and contains interviews with experts from the San Francisco Zoo, San Diego Wild Animal Park, and the Chula Vista Nature Center.

Tips: The teacher's guide, which is included in the school edition, features a list of references for further study and 15 activities that can be adapted by grade level. Reviewers with the California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse note that teachers can use this program as a multimedia supplement to a textbook or lecture. Teachers can also check on the progress of their students using the program's quiz feature. Students can use *Animals in Danger* for individual research on particular animals or ecosystems and can print charts and photographs to enhance presentations.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98. **Good**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, 1997; California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; *Technology Connection*, May/June, 1997.

Earth Explorer

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 4–9

Subject(s): Science
Earth Science
Astronomy

Cost: $69.95; Lab Pack (5) $99.95; Lab pack (10) $179.95; Site license (25) $399.95; Unlimited site license $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/25MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors, sound card and speakers ; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive science simulation** provides students with a multimedia tour of our planet. Along the way, students visit all areas of the earth, from the rain forest to the oceans to the human world, and learn about a variety of environmental issues. Contemporary problems such as acid rain are explored in-depth with an overview story followed by a game where students listen to differing viewpoints on the topic. Students use this information to draw their own conclusions. One of the program's features, Data Sets, contains a variety of visual representations such as graphs and maps that can help students learn about issues such as public health, the water cycle, and energy conservation. An extensive glossary helps students define terms.

Tips: Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators note that this program contains high-quality graphics that help motivate student interest. Reviewers with North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction add that among this program's strengths, "information is clearly organized and easy to find with intuitive icons, article outlines, and a visual navigation map . . . . A linking feature enables students to cross easily from one area of the program to another to find related articles, data, and activities." These reviewers conclude that *Earth Explorer* "contains an extensive amount of information on timely issues that students can use for research, to create their own graphs, and to practice critical thinking skills." This program has been reviewed for accuracy by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Fermilab Lederman Science Center, 1995. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1996; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), April 1997; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998.

Eyewitness Virtual Reality: Earth Quest

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
DK Multimedia

Copyright: 1997

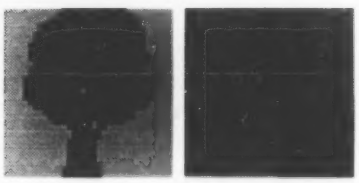
Grade(s): 4–12

Subject(s): Science
Earth Science
Geology

Cost: $29.95; Lab pack (5) $89.95. A school edition is available. Contact publisher for availability and pricing.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Dorling Kindersly's *Eyewitness* series continues with this **multimedia earth science exploration**. In this program, students learn about geology and geologic themes by investigating the scientific principles behind volcanoes, minerals, and tectonic plates. The specific features of the program are housed in the Virtual Cave Museum, which offers students numerous options for exploration. Earth Gallery groups rocks and minerals into types and features text and color illustrations. Shaping the Earth features videos and animations of rocks forming as well as text and descriptive illustrations of such dramatic geologic features as alpine valleys and oceanic coasts. A Violent Earth section addresses recent as well as historic earthquakes and volcanoes. Earth Builder uses a gaming format to challenge students to reconstruct tectonic plates as well as find minerals using clues. All of the content in this program is cross-referenced and indexed for easy searching and navigation.

Tips: Judges with the Bologna New Media Prize call *Earth Quest* "an evolving and involving product, with amazing depth, content, and interaction, letting children of all ages discover the wonder of the planet." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluators add that the program "deserves a place in any science instructional program as a teaching resource and a research tool." California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse evaluators concur by stating that earth systems are "explained in a simple manner to hold student's attention and to provide appropriate grade-level information. The program is rich in visuals, videos, and audio clips, and the Cave Museum layout gives a feel of virtual reality."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1998; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999.

A Field Trip to the Rainforest Deluxe

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 4–8

Subject(s): Science
Ecology
Earth Science
Biology

Cost (School Edition): $89.95; Lab packs and site licenses are available. Contact publisher for most recent pricing information. A home version is available for $19.95.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 8MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM;
Macintosh System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 8MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This enhanced and updated CD-ROM version of a previous *Only the Best* entry takes students on an **interactive science-based journey** to the fragile ecosystems of rainforests in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. *Field Trip to the Rainforest* uses colorful illustrations and photographs of animals, insects, and plants to capture the diversity of the rainforest. Students start at the main menu, where the host, Iguana Jack, explains the various features of the program: Discovery allows students to visit one of the three available rainforest regions in either a day or night environment; Data Table contains information on 50 plants and more than 100 animals that inhabit the rainforests; Term Book pronounces words and provides definitions; Camera lets students take snapshots of the plants and animals in the rainforest; and Student Journal enables students to transfer notes, text, and pictures into their own reports and presentations. Fun Facts uses a gaming format to test knowledge that students have gained by using the program. A six-chapter Field Guide contains information on the various plants, insects, and animals, and is a useful reference. An appendix contains resources for further information.

Tips: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluators call this program "an excellent research tool for students in grades four and higher" and note that younger students may also gain surface knowledge by simply visiting the rainforests and viewing the animals in their natural habitats.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Learning Magazine's* Teacher's Choice Awards, 1999. **Good**—*Book Report*, November/December 1998; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1998.

The Great Solar System Rescue

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Tom Snyder Productions

Copyright: 1997

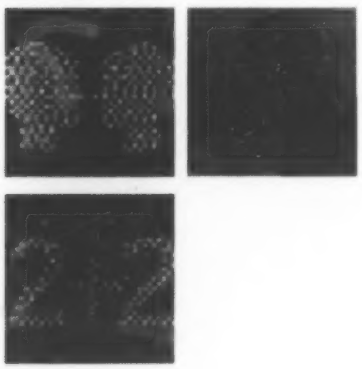
Grade(s): 5–8

Subject(s): Science
Mathematics
Social Studies
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $99.95; Lab pack (5) $249.95; Lab pack (10) $399.95. Site licenses are available. Contact publisher for recent pricing information.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM;
Macintosh System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Students develop problem-solving and group decision-making skills in this **space-based simulation program**. Working in cooperative groups, students role-play as scientific experts (such as an astronomer or geologist) who must find and rescue probes lost in our solar system. An opening video provides clues as to where to look for the lost probe. As members of the team watch the video, they take notes and make observations that they will later use in the simulation. The second part of the program asks students to use their Expert Reports (provided with the program) to analyze the clues and work as a group to gain consensus on a plan of action for rescuing the probes. Additional resources on the CD-ROM include a multimedia library featuring more than short movies and still pictures and a teacher's guide.

Tips: The publisher notes the flexibility of this program, stating that it can be used in either a classroom setting with just one computer or in a large computer lab. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluators call this program, "highly motivating, encouraging learning through real-life role playing" and say that the teacher's manual's "well-planned work sheets and additional resources" are a particular strength. These evaluators also like how the program integrates science and social studies objectives and motivates reluctant learners in a cooperative learning environment.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998. **Good**—ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1997; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, May 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1997.

JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade: Mission Earth Quest

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1998

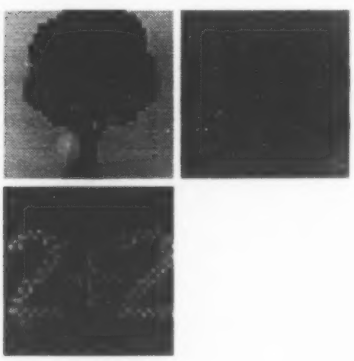
Grade(s): 5–7

Subject(s): Science
Earth Science
Language Arts
Mathematics
Social Studies

Cost (School Edition): $60; Lab pack (5 copies) $120; Site license (15 copies) $325. A home version is available for $20.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, PowerPC or faster, 16MB RAM, 15MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 13" monitor.

Intelligences:



Description: Middle school students age 10–12 have the opportunity to help protect the world from environmental disaster in this **adventure-based science program**. Students assume the role of either Jess or Zack (teenage animated characters) as they try to protect the planet from an artificial intelligence system (A.R.T.) bent on destroying the environment. Using the control center as a base of operations, students access any of the nine missions in the program and experience more than 4,000 curriculum-based challenges. Through the completion of these missions, students help to prevent deforestation, reduce pollution, save numerous endangered species, and rescue famous world monuments from destruction. Although the program has a science-based theme, *JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade* also builds and tests knowledge in other content areas such as mathematics, social studies, and language arts. Special features of the program include Kid's Assessment Technology, which determines each child's academic ability; Adaptive Learning Technology, which adjusts the program's degrees of difficulty based on students' performance; and Kid's Tutor Technology, which illustrates difficult concepts. A teacher's guide (provided only with the School Edition) provides additional activity and lesson plan ideas, and a Resource Center allows teachers or parents to monitor individual student progress.

Tips: A *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator writes, "if you're looking for a game that teaches core content, *JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade* offers a fun and easy way to increase your students' basic fund of knowledge and will definitely appeal to students in grades 4–6."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, May/June 1999. **Good**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, February 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

LEGO Mindstorms

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
LEGO Americas

Copyright: 1998

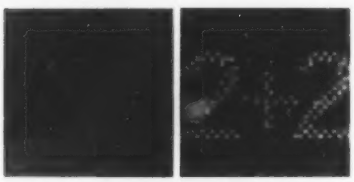
Grade(s): 6–12

Subject(s):
Science
Problem Solving
Creativity
Mathematics
Robotics
Programming

Cost: $200

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 90MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 50MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: Setting the stage for software programs in the new millennium, this **creativity, mathematics, and problem-solving program** challenges students to develop their own living (and moving) LEGO robots. In addition to the CD-ROM, this program comes with about 700 LEGO building parts, a small computer with light sensors and switches, and an infrared transmitter. The program is integrated through the RCX minicomputer which needs 512K of RAM and six AA batteries to operate and is roughly the size of an office stapler. Using the RCX (which uses programming instructions sent by a personal computer to its infrared receiver) and the provided LEGO pieces, students construct their robots (such as cars, automatic can collectors, and, for the advanced student, even copiers and cameras). Next, students create the programming language that will allow their robots to perform actions. Experienced software evaluators note that although the thought of teaching programming skills can be intimidating, *LEGO MINDSTORMS* does a great job detailing how to do the programming through a user-friendly tutorial that provides thorough instructions--both written and verbal. Even young children were able to find success using the "drag- and -drop" application. An online component to this program, (http://www.legomindstorms.com/), offers ideas for new robots, forums for builders of all levels, and classes for "master builders."

Tips: In awarding this program its "Most Innovative" Award, judges with the Bologna New Media Prize say that as "blurring the distinction between toy and software, this innovative robotic construction set empowers children to play with 21st century technology on and off the computer." One of *Children's Software Revue's* evaluators adds that if teachers or parents want their kids to "become engineers or programmers, they should get this [program]."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, November/December 1998.

Nine Worlds

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Palladium Interactive

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Science
Astronomy
Reference

Cost: $19.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space (10MB recommended), 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space (10MB recommended), 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: Patrick Stewart, of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* fame, hosts this **multimedia tour of the solar system**. The program is organized into three specific areas: Planets provides guided tours focusing on the nine planets and the sun; Resource Explorers offers a quiz based on the tours of the planets and also points out materials that novice astronomers can use for further study; and Mankind's View looks at the solar system through the lens of human space exploration ranging from Stonehenge to Galileo to the Viking Orbiter. Each of the areas features audio narrations, full-motion videos, hundreds of satellite and telescopic photographs, planet illustrations and maps, and interviews with some of the world's leading astronomers. In addition to the academically based tours and resources, this program provides some fun activities such as vacation planner that lets students use their acquired knowledge of Mars and other planets to pack a suitcase and plan a visit to the red planet. Purchasers of the CD-ROM gain access to the *Nine Worlds* Web site which features forums to share ideas and information with other space enthusiasts and a monthly multimedia astronomy newsletter that contains articles by experts.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators note that "drawbacks to this program are few" and that *Nine Worlds* is "terrific for space enthusiasts and science classrooms."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, April/May 1997; Developmental Software Awards, 1999.

Orcas in Our Midst

(CD-ROM: MAC)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1998

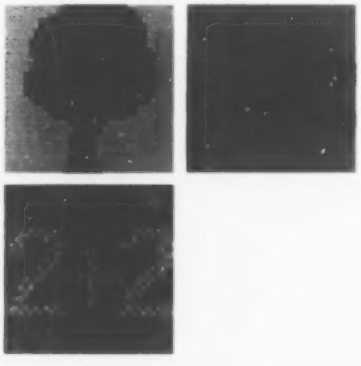
Grade(s): 4–8

Subject(s): Science
Biology
Social Studies

Cost (School Edition): $99.95; Lab packs and site licenses are available. Please contact publisher for latest pricing.

Hardware Requirements:
Macintosh System 7.01 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Students can study and explore the underwater world of one of the most popular ocean creatures in this **multimedia investigation and reference program**. Through video clips, narration, and text, students learn about the life of the orca, its interrelationships with other animals of the ocean, and how the orca has been portrayed by humans as a creature of folklore and a creature of prey. Students can explore numerous individual topics in depth—such as how scientists identify pods of orcas — through an "investigations" feature. After developing their knowledge of specific topics, students are taken into a challenge screen, where they apply what they have learned. While using *Orcas in Our Midst*, students will develop their abilities to make scientific observations, build hypotheses, test theories, write descriptive text, and form and articulate opinions on public and environmental policy issues. Specific knowledge of orcas and ocean life is presented in an interdisciplinary fashion, featuring mathematics, social studies, and language arts. The included teacher's materials feature directions, activities, and resources.

Tips: An evaluator with *Book Report* praises this program noting that "development of questioning strategies throughout the program is excellent" and conclude that "by integrating history, science, Native American stories, and language arts, students are afforded a comprehensive look into the lives of whales and their impact on the ecosystems."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99.

PhysicalElementa: The World of Physics

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Intellectum

Copyright: 1997

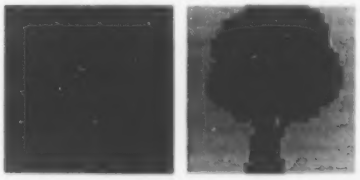
Grade(s): 7–12

Subject(s): Science
Physics
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $199; Lab pack (5) $399; $720 Lab pack (10). A home edition is available for $69.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486DX/66 MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive exploration program** allows students to approach the study of physics in a new way. Using a graphical interface to focus on Measurements and Units, Physical Quantities and Phenomena, and States of Matter, students complete animated tutorials that track their progress (which can be checked by teachers). Within the tutorials are a series of problems that assess students' learning on the topics above. After students solve the problems, a summary is presented that recaps the problem input, main reasoning steps, and problem output. The program contains a glossary, calculator, and notepad that serve as helpful tools while students attempt to conquer the specific physics problems. *World of Physics* is one title within the *PhysicalElementa* series, which is a collection of teaching and learning tools that address physics within the realm of mechanics, heat and temperature, electricity and magnetism, and light and optics. Other titles include *Measure and Units*, *Physical Quantities*, *States of Matter*, *Velocity and Acceleration* and *Friction*.

Tips: A teacher-evaluator with *Book Report* sums up her support of this program, noting that "students quickly caught on and used the tutorial, tables, and calculator [and] I was able to track their progress and adjust the program to suit students."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Book Report*, September/October 1998; *ConnSENSE Bulletin*, February 1999.

Rainforest Explorer

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Orange Cherry/New Media Schoolhouse

Copyright: 1995

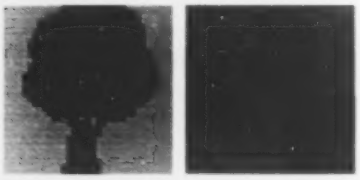
Grade(s): 4–8

Subject(s): Science
Environment
Geography

Cost (School Edition): $49.95; Lab pack (5) $139.95; Site license $349. A home edition is available for $34.95.

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 6.0.7 or later, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **environmental discovery program** takes students deep into the rainforest to explore exotic animals, flowering plants, indigenous people, and the dangers that threaten this delicately balanced ecosystem. Presented in a slide show format, students click from one page to the next while viewing more than 400 photographs, rainforest maps, and more than 45 minutes of full-motion video. The slide shows are grouped into six categories— Introduction, People, Plants, Animals, Ecosystem, and Workshop, and each show is narrated. The workshop area contains a glossary, that explains some of the terms used in the program, a bibliography for those students interested in further study, and three activities (including a quiz).

Tips: Evaluators with the Binghamton (NY) City School District call this program an "excellent resource for independent classroom research." Although they also recommend this program, evaluators with Lesley College's Instructional Computing Department warned that "the glossary would have been more useful if it had been accessible from within the different sections and students will find the lack of printing capabilities frustrating."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Binghamton (NY) City School District, September 1998. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, 1997; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools; 1998; Lesley College Instructional Computing Department, 1998.

RedShift 3

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Piranha Interactive Publishing Inc.

Copyright: 1998

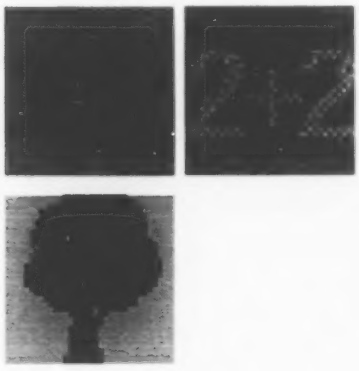
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Science
Astronomy

Cost: $49.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 100MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, Power MAC 90 or faster, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive exploration program** creates a planetarium right on the computer desktop. Using images and technology from NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab, Russia's Space Mission Control Center, and the Hipparcos and Tycho star catalogs, this program allows the user to create a view of the sky from virtually any location at virtually any point in time. Some of the key features in *RedShift 3* include a celestial mechanics engine that accurately plots the position of more than 1,000,000 stars, asteroids, and comets; more than 60 narrated multimedia tours written by expert astronomers; a dictionary of astronomy terms; Sky Diary, which allows students to record and map celestial movements; movie-making capabilities that enable users to record their explorations; and detailed surface maps of Earth, Mars, Venus, and the Moon featured in 16-bit graphics. An interesting additional feature is this program's "time control," which allows students to position themselves to look at the night sky at any point between 4700 B.C. and 9999 A.D. (users can position themselves at any point in space or even choose the town or city where they were born). Although this program was designed for beginners, advanced students of astronomy will be pleased with the versatile interface and control panel. Users with an Internet connection and web browser can use *RedShift 3* to download the latest scientific discoveries directly from integrated Internet links.

Tips: Reviewers at *MultiMedia Schools* declare, "no longer do teachers have to wait for that once-a-year trip to the planetarium. Now they can use *RedShift 3* to incorporate multimedia into the instructional program to display night skies and interesting astronomical events."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, March/April 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores the Rainforest

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 1–6

Subject(s): Science
Ecology
Earth Science

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486DX/33 MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 6MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors, sound card and speakers.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive science adventure** takes students on a field trip deep into the Costa Rican Rainforest along with their irrepressible teacher, Ms. Frizzle. Once aboard the Magic School Bus, students are transported to the rainforest, where they encounter varied climates, diverse plant life, and animal habitats. In all, students will visit three main layers of the rainforest along with seven eco-zones. Multimedia tools such as a magnifying glass, butterfly net, microphone, spotting scope, and field guide are used to enrich the field trip. This program features 14 games and activities such as the Habitat Build, which asks students to experiment with varying levels of temperature and rainfall in creating habitats. More than 20 multimedia reports provide extensive background information. Throughout the field trip, students can take "snapshots" that are entered into their journals.

This program is based on the successful book series and TV show of the same name and is one of a series of software products based on the "Magic School Bus Explores" theme (others include the Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean, Human Body, and the Age of Dinosaurs).

Applications for Diverse Learners: This program is close captioned for the deaf or hearing impaired.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* reviewers note that among this program's strengths, the "graphics are great, the format encourages exploration, and the whole product is information-packed." However, these reviewers also note that "on the downside, many of the 14 games embedded in the program are weak arcade-style pursuits at best (note: the kid-testers weren't bothered by this, but the adults felt the activities could have been more content-rich)."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Developmental Software Awards, 1997. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, September/October 1997.

Science Court: Water Cycle

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Tom Snyder Productions

Copyright: 1997

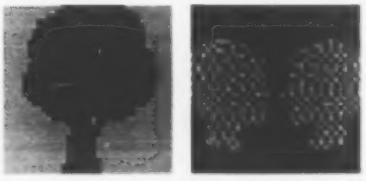
Grade(s): 4–6

Subject(s): Science
Earth Science
Problem Solving

Cost: $59.95; Lab pack (5) $249.95; Lab pack (10) $450

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive exploration program** is one of 12 in the Science Court series. In this program, meteorologist Maria Hernandez takes the stand in a courtroom drama centered around the stages of the water cycle. During the trial, students listen to the testimony of Maria and others as they learn about the states of matter of water and the water cycle in general. The program is broken down into four sections, and students work in cooperative groups organized around a Question and Prediction theme. Within their groups, students are given information based on the testimony of one of the witnesses. The group uses this information to answer essential questions and to make a prediction for the next phase of the trial. The group then pools their resources and conducts experiments based on the water cycle. Video clips of the trial and a Courtroom Correspondent help guide students to the correct answers and keep the group on task.

Tips: *Technology Connection* notes that this program "encourages students to think critically about the states of the water cycle by having them make inferences, conduct hands-on experiments, and make predictions" and concludes that, "this program will hold the attention of the class with its delightful characters and sense of humor." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators add that student and teacher instructions "promote cooperative learning and motivate student learning in a creative and well-organized fashion." The Science Court series also includes titles on electric current, gravity, inertia, fossils, living things, particles in motion, seasons, soil, sound, statistics, and work and simple machines.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Booklist*, 1999; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology Connection*, February 1998. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1997; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1998; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1998.

Star Wars DroidWorks

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Lucas Learning

Copyright: 1998

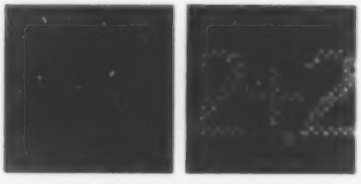
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Science
Physics
Mathematics

Cost: $39.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 133MHz or faster, 32MB RAM, 81MB hard drive space; **Macintosh** System 7.5.5 or higher, 120MHz PowerPC 603e or faster, 32MB RAM, 52MB hard drive space.

Intelligences:



Description: Admittedly an "Edutainment" title, this **interactive science-based program** challenges students to design and build Droids (robotic creatures from Star Wars fame) with special attributes to complete a series of missions. While constructing the Droids, students are asked to learn, understand, and apply scientific principles such as gravity, magnetism, trajectory, and light speed. If the Droids are not constructed with the utmost precision and respect to the scientific principles, then they will likely fail the missions, and the student will have to go back to the drawing board.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators note that this program took the "latest, coolest video game technology and made it into something that children can learn from."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, January/Febr[illegible] 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the CODIES), 1999.

Stars and Stories

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Wildridge Software Inc.

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 7–12

Subject(s): Science
Astronomy
Mathematics
Mythology

Cost: $89.95; Optional teacher's guide $10

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space to run from the CD-ROM, 400MB hard drive space to run directly from the hard drive, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers. Optional Internet features require 28.8 modem, ISP, and browser; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space to run from the CD-ROM, 400MB hard drive space to run directly from the hard drive, 2X CD-ROM. Optional Internet features require 28.8 modem, ISP, and browser.

Intelligences:

Description: This interdisciplinary **multimedia reference program** integrates astronomy, mythology, and mathematics for students ages 13 and above in seven narrated multimedia exercises which present problems and projects for students to work on. Specific concepts covered in the exercises include geometry, graphing (including plotting star charts), trigonometry, scientific notation, physics, mythology (in constellations), and history (as it relates to astronomy). Periodic quizzes provide instant analysis of student retention. A comprehensive glossary helps students fully understand all of the terms being used, and extension activities include Internet links (see Hardware Requirements) to astronomy Web sites. Both a teacher's guide and a student guide can be printed from the CD-ROM or purchased separately.

Tips: Evaluators with Binghamton (NY) City School District note that *Stars and Stories* is a beautifully designed program that is "easy to use and filled with information." They add that this program seems especially useful for independent or enriched studies. A *ConnSENSE* evaluator adds that the "graphics and animation are sharp" and that the program "deserves a place in every school's software library."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Binghamton City (NY) School District, 1999; *ConnSENSE Bulletin*, February 1999.

Thinkin' Science

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Edmark Corporation

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): K–3

Subject(s): Science
Earth Science
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $59.95; Lab pack (6) $160; Site license (30 users) $599. A home edition is available for $29.95.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **explorative adventure** transports students to the Super Secret Science Station, where they can learn more about the earth and the world around them. Accompanied by Bobbie (a sock), Buddy (a leaf), and Einstone (a rock), children can explore five different scientific themes: Day and Night helps to explain the earth's rotation and the changing of seasons. Mystery Cave encourages students to use their sensory and measurement skills to explore an unknown object. Animal Tracking asks students to identify animals based on their tracks. What Did You See helps students improve their memory and observation skills, and Fun Physics introduces the basic elements of motion. While completing the activities, students will develop their sequential thinking, deductive reasoning, and problem-solving skills. Each of the activities has multiple levels that can be set manually. Science Web, a detailed reference section, encourages students to explore these science themes further.

Tips: *MultiMedia Schools* evaluators conclude: "We found a strong program with carefully designed features that make it extremely user friendly and versatile for both lab and classroom use. . . . This program is a real asset for any elementary science program." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reviewers add that *Thinkin' Science* is a "highly interactive program [that] fosters thinking skills and application of the science method." *Library Talk* notes that the school version of this program contains a teacher's guide with additional information and activities which accompany the software.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*ConnSENSE Bulletin*, February 1999; Developmental Software Awards, 1999; *MultiMedia Schools*, September/October 1998. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, May/June 1998; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; *Library Talk*, September/October 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), April 1998.

Thinkin' Science Series—Zap!

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Edmark Corporation

Copyright: 1998

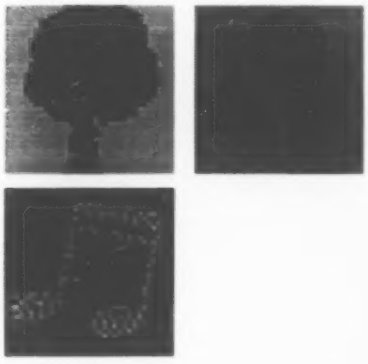
Grade(s): 5–7

Subject(s): Science
Electricity
Problem Solving
Music

Cost (School Edition): $59.95; A home version is available for $29.95.

Hardware Requirements: **Windows** 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB for PowerPC), 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: The world-famous WonderDome—an auditorium of light, sound, and electricity—has been put out of commission by a lightning storm, and students are called on to save the day in this **science-based activity program**. Working in the laboratory with esteemed scientists, Riff, Surge, and Blaze, students learn the principles of light, sound, and electricity. In the SoundWave Studio, students see, hear, and control sound waves; test properties; and blend and identify sounds. Laser Lab gives students the opportunity to explore the properties of light and color while sending lasers through lenses, filters, and around obstacles. In Electroloft, students build circuits and troubleshoot electrical problems that occur in everyday items such as flashlights and fans. A "Sci-Clopedia" provides students with definitions, animated examples, and a notepad to help them solve problems posed by Blaze, Riff, and Surge. The difficulty level of the problems increases automatically or can be set by teachers manually. As students complete the activities in the labs, they are awarded concert components so that when the WonderDome comes back to life, they are treated to a multimedia light and sound show. This program also contains 260 science-based articles written for middle school students.

Tips: Evaluators with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction note that *Zap* would "serve as an excellent resource for independent and small group exploration to deepen middle school students' conceptual understandings of light, sound, and electrical energy and to develop critical thinking skills."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, 1998; Developmental Software Awards, 1999; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

The Way Things Work: Pinball Science

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
DK Multimedia

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 5–9

Subject(s): Science
Physics

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 75 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 24MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive activity program** challenges students to answer science-based questions as they build a fully playable pinball machine. The activities begin as students are placed at one of three locations (a village, an island, or the moon). After correctly answering questions based on scientific principles such as friction, gravity, and force, students are rewarded a component of a pinball machine (such as a lever or spring). When all of the questions have been correctly answered, the pinball machine becomes fully operational and children can have fun racking up high scores. In all, *Pinball Science* builds and quizzes the knowledge base of students on 24 curriculum-based science (focused mainly on physics) topics. An Inventor's Journal, which provides clues, hints, and other scientific research is just a click away if students get stuck on any of the questions or just need general help.

Tips: This program contains three levels of difficulty and includes bonus questions that would challenge the best of science students. Binghamton City (NY) School District evaluators state that this program would be an "excellent supplement to a middle school physics unit." *Children's Software Revue* evaluators add that they "seldom see a program that so nicely balances educational value with fun, and conclude that "this program is just super and would make a great addition to classroom and home software libraries."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, November/December 1998; Binghamton (NY) City School District, September 1998. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*) March 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

American History Inspirer: The Civil War

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Tom Snyder Productions

Copyright: 1997

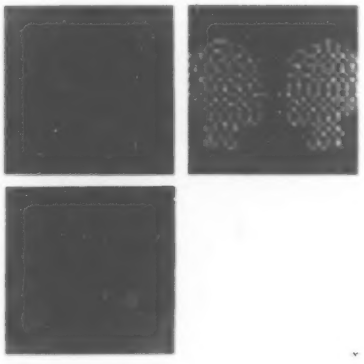
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History
Geography
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $79.95; Lab pack (5) $199.95; Lab pack (10) $349.95; Site license $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM; **Macintosh** 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Working alone or in groups, students research the political, social, and economic developments that led up to the Civil War in this **historical investigative program**. The research is conducted in an interactive approach as students use six historical maps (dated from 1820 to 1865) to plan routes across the country, uncovering facts and trends such as the rise of cotton in the South, industrialization in the North, and expansion in the western states. This program highlights the use of geography as a tool in gaining historical understanding and helps students to investigate the various perspectives of the antebellum and Civil War eras. *American History Inspirer* contains a time line that helps tie the program together. This program features three levels of difficulty that can be controlled by the teacher.

Tips: Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools reviewers note that this program "enables students to explore and make decisions about many facets concerning the Civil War . . . [and] offers challenge, motivation, problem solving, and collaborative student effort." A *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator adds that this product is "an excellent program for use in upper elementary grades through high school. It presents an interactive study of important trends in American history and geography, . . . requires a keen sense of history, and its use of cooperative groups fits nicely within a classroom setting."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; *MultiMedia Schools*, September/October 1998. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), September 1998.

AskAsia

(Internet Service—http://www.askasia.org)

Publisher:
Asia Society

Copyright: n/a

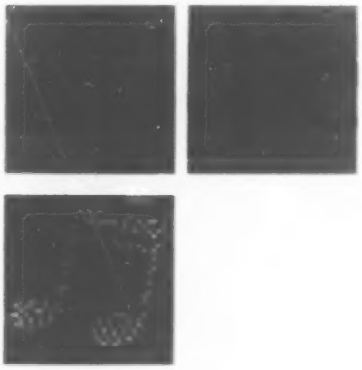
Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
World History
World Cultures
Foreign Language

Cost: Free

Hardware Requirements:
Users of this site will need an Internet connection and browser (Netscape or Explorer 3.0 or higher). To access some of the higher-end files, users will need Internet plug-ins such as Shockwave.

Intelligences:



Description: This free **Internet-based resource** offers educators a wealth of materials that can be used in K–12 Asian studies classes. Components of the Web site include the Educators Link, which features instructional resources, professional development and grant opportunities, and links to other schools studying Asia; the Adult-Free Zone for students, with an activity corner, connections to e-pals in other schools, and links to other sites for students to discover more about Asian societies and cultures; and the Gateway to Asia which features general links and connections to *AskAsia*'s sponsors. A search function and site map help the user navigate through the Web site to find specific resources.

Tips: Teachers will find the Instructional Resources section helpful as they prepare lesson and unit plans on Asian countries (the resources are categorized by country and are searchable by keyword). Teachers can also access maps, readings, photographs, and music, which they then can use to add variety to their text-based materials. *AskAsia* occasionally hosts specially selected live lectures, discussions, and other events featuring leading Asian and Asian American writers, artists, educators, and political experts. These special programs allow students to ask questions, join the discussion, and exchange ideas. One example of this special feature was the recent Vietnam Challenge, which encouraged students to track a three-week bicycle race through the South East Asian country by reading participant diaries and learning about the geography and language of Vietnam. The Challenge also offered links that educators of all grade levels could use to develop units of study on Vietnam.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1998; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99.

Children's Atlas of the United States

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Rand McNally

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 2–8

Subject(s): Social Studies
Geography
U.S. History
Language Arts

Cost: $69.95, Lab pack (5) $169.95; Lab pack (10) $279.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386/25MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or higher, 68030 or faster, 5MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This **geographical reference program** highlights important information about all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Animated markers represent state capitals and geographic landmarks such as rivers and mountains. Graphs, charts, and written text are also included to teach children about the United States. Students can view the whole country at once, or they can zoom in on a particular state. Two narrators provide an overview of each state's history and points of interest. The program is brought to life by the use of 200 photographs and animations as well as by more than 60 video clips. After becoming familiar with the program, students test their knowledge and strengthen their problem-solving skills by playing one of six games. Topics in the games include matching state outlines, positioning state puzzle pieces, and driving across the country following clues.

Tips: *Children's Atlas of the United States* comes packaged with a 96-page teacher's guide that offers suggestions on how to effectively use the program in the classroom.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1997–98. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1995; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1995.

Cold War

(Videotapes and Internet—http://learning.turner.com/coldwar)

Publisher:
Turner Learning

Copyright: 1998

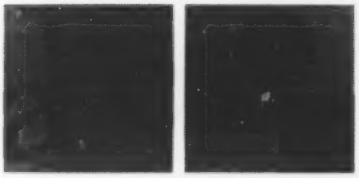
Grade(s): 9–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
World History
U.S. History

Cost: The Internet resources are free, but the video series costs from $119 for schools and libraries to $217 for individual consumers.

Hardware Requirements:
A modem, Internet connection, and browser are needed to use the online component of this program.

Intelligences:



Description: This **multimedia course on the Cold War** features a 24-part video series (on 12 tapes) that is enhanced by resources available at the Turner Learning Web site <http://learning.turner.com/coldwar/>. Originally aired on the Cable News Network (CNN) in the fall of 1998, these tapes can now be purchased and used in the classroom. The tapes span the entire course of the Cold War and feature hours of news footage, interviews with witnesses and historical experts, and questions for further study. The accompanying Web site offers tips for using the Cold War series in the classroom, an overview of each of the episodes, explicit connections to national social studies and history standards, essential questions that students can debate, interactive maps and time lines, and ideas for lesson plans. An individual Web page corresponds to each of the video episodes and contains a transcript of the video, a glossary of terms, and a wealth of hyperlinked resources. The Cold War Web site also contains information on creating a student project focusing on oral history research.

Tips: The additional resources link for each episode offers students a chance to go back in time and "live the cold war" through the lyrics of the songs of the day, speeches from politicians on both sides of the war, and primary documents. Additional Web links from the Library of Congress and the National Archives offer ways to organize and analyze the information contained in the primary source documents. In addition to the video and Internet resources, an accompanying book (*Cold War*) containing background information, more than 600 illustrations, and a wealth of newly uncovered documents is available for sale to educators for $39.95 through Little Brown Publishers (800-759-0190).

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999.

Community Construction Kit

(CD-ROM. MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Tom Snyder Productions

Copyright: 1998

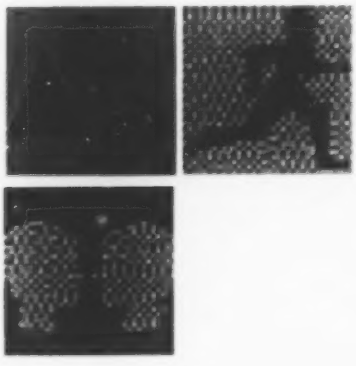
Grade(s): 2–6

Subject(s): Social Studies
Geography
U.S. History

Cost (School edition): $79.95; Lab pack (5) $199.95; Lab pack (10) $349.95; Network license $599.95; Site license $799.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or higher, 486/66 MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB for WIN 95/98), 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** 7.1 or higher, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive building tool** allows students to create and print 3-D houses and communities from the Medieval, Native American, Colonial, and Contemporary American time periods. Using the computer, students decide what era they wish to investigate and then they design, print, and construct 3-D building models. Students are responsible for developing entire buildings and can customize the look by adding porches, windows, trim, or any number of add-ons available from the Construction Area. Students can also add people, plants and animals to give their work a community feel. After finalizing their buildings and printing their work, students can work in groups to create 3-D communities. Special features of this program include My Art, in which students attach drawings or clip art to personalize their work; Photo Gallery, which offers a selection of pictures and narrated descriptions related to the buildings of the era, and Print Goodies, which allows the user to print out certificates, floor-sized maps, and stand-up figures. The teacher's guide offers ideas for classroom activities.

Tips: Evaluators with *MultiMedia Schools* note that this program would enhance many classrooms because it "combines good technology with hands-on manipulatives," and they add that "students can show their accomplishments and engage in active learning." An evaluator with Lesley College's Instructional Computing Department thoroughly enjoyed this program, calling *Community Construction Kit* "a must for every primary classroom."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Lesley College Instructional Computing Department, 1998; *MultiMedia Schools*, March/April 1999. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; *Library Talk*, January/February 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), April 1999; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the CODIES), 1999.

Encarta Virtual Globe

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 4-12

Subject(s): Social Studies
Geography
Reference
World Cultures
World History

Cost: $54.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 75MHz or faster, 16MB RAM (24MB recommended), 29MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This **multimedia atlas** contains a wealth of geographic information that can be used for classroom instruction or individual student research. From the user-friendly main screen, students can explore the features of *Virtual Globe* including 18 customizable map styles (including the surface of the moon); clearly written articles that often include pictures as well as music and video clips; world tours that examine global issues such as pollution, deforestation, and human migration. Students can explore 192 countries via profiles that contain pertinent articles, photographs, and multimedia files. A Statistics Center with data from sources such as the World Bank and United States Census Bureau acts as a warehouse for more than 280 indicators of geographic interest. A feature unique to this program is the 3-D computer animated flights over such geographic areas as the Grand Canyon and Japan. The Internet links embedded in this program offer opportunities for further study. Users can customize their own maps using templates and pushpins to identify landmarks.

Tips: Reviewers with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction state "this program expands background knowledge and stimulates curiosity while providing a strong reference base for research." Judges with the Bologna New Media Prize rate this program highly, declaring that, "this king of the electronic atlases gets more impressive each year." Our reviewers also note that the program does a nice job balancing aspects of both physical and human geography and their interrelatedness. *Editor's note*: This product is updated annually. Please contact publisher for information on latest releases.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1998; *Booklist*, January 1999; California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999. **Good**—*Library Talk*, September/October 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), December 1998.

Facts on File

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Facts on File News Services

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 6–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
World History
U.S. History

Cost: $1,150 site license (with quarterly updates)

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386 or faster, 520K conventional free RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM; **Macintosh** System 6.05 or later, 68030 or faster, 1.5MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: This **reference program** of recent history allows students to easily search and find information about news stories that have occurred within the past 20 years. *Facts on File* has been compiling print-based news references since 1980 and now they have used this warehouse of information to create a CD-ROM which contains more than 70,000 news articles, 200 photographs, numerous biographies of major newsmakers, maps and country profiles, and more than 400 primary source documents. Subjects are indexed into such categories as Human Rights, War and Weaponry, and Accidents and Disasters. Additional resources on this CD-ROM include content from *Issues and Controversies on File*, *Today's Science on File* and *Funk and Wagnall's New Encyclopedia*. All of the resources on this CD-ROM are accessed via an Internet browser interface which many students are already accustomed to (however, no live link to the Internet is available through this program). Many of the articles in this program are cross-referenced for further research.

Tips: Although the cost may be prohibitive, the program is valuable because it is updated four times a year to keep the content current. Our reviewers caution that "natural language" boolean searches such as "where is Iraq?" were often unsuccessful or returned incomplete results. Overall, however, a *MultiMedia Schools* reviewer concludes that when comparing *Facts on File* with similar CD-ROMS and Internet sites, this program "contains a wider diversity of articles from a larger number of sources [and] this product should appeal to those researchers who require quick digest summaries of issues or need help narrowing down broad research topics." Evaluators with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction add that this program would be a "useful networkable resource in media centers and classrooms to support current events research in a variety of curriculum areas."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, May/June 1998; *TechTrends*, March 1998. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1998.

His Name Was Lincoln

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): 7–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History

Cost: $79.95; Lab pack (5) $99.95; Lab pack (10) $179.95; Site license (25) $399.95; Unlimited site license $599.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This set of two CD-ROMS contains an **interactive historical biography** that details the life and times of the United States' 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. The first CD-ROM, Peace covers Lincoln's early life and his rise to the presidency. War covers Lincoln's presidency, the Civil War, and his assassination. The CD-ROM set is divided into 13 chapters that feature speeches, political cartoons, archival photographs, personal letters, cabinet debates, and interviews with leading Lincoln scholars. Also featured within the 48 interactive modules are period music, narrated first-person accounts, and poetry from the 19th century. Students can read Lincoln's own correspondence by clicking on the recreation of his presidential desk. A time line feature contains a detailed chronological list of dates as well as brief descriptions, and a bibliography section offers suggestions for further reading.

Tips: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluators note that, "this beautifully constructed program has a wealth of information to supplement units on the Civil War period. Parts of it are particularly suitable for whole-class display and discussion, but the organizational structure is designed mainly for small groups to analyze individual sections." *History Computer Review* strongly recommends purchase of this program by anyone teaching this period and states that *His Name Was Lincoln* "sets a high standard for educational software." The reviewer concludes that this program will "lead to many fruitful discussions with students and leave them with a better understanding of who Lincoln was."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education,1998–99; *History Computer Review*, Fall 1996; *MultiMedia Schools*, September/October 1997; *Technology Connection*, May/June 1997. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1997; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1997; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, November/December 1997.

Meiko: A Story of Japanese Culture

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Digital Productions

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): 2–6

Subject(s): Social Studies
Japan
World History
World Cultures
Foreign Languages
Language Arts

Cost (School Edition): $59.95; Lab pack (5) $119.95; Site licenses and home editions are available. Please contact publisher for most recent pricing information.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster; 8MB RAM, 3MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: Based on the children's book by Leo Politi, this **multimedia storybook** introduces students to various aspects of Japanese culture. In this program, Meiko, a young American girl of Japanese descent, begins to explore the culture of her ancestors. Students join Meiko as she learns more about her native country's culture through exposure to Japanese traditions and customs such as martial arts, tea ceremonies, calligraphy, origami, and Japanese clothing, music, and cuisine. Through Meiko's eyes and experiences, students also learn about Japanese history, geography, and religion. The school edition of this program includes a comprehensive teacher's guide that features background information, ideas for extension activities, a glossary of Japanese terms, suggestions for how to host a Japanese Cultural Festival, and a bibliography of related resources.

Applications for Diverse Learners: An interesting component to this program is that the text and narration can be experienced not only in English and Japanese but also in French, German, or Spanish. This range of translations would allow students with limited English proficiency to fully enjoy the program.

Tips: In calling this a "must buy," a *MultiMedia Schools* evaluator writes that this program is a "well-researched program that offers many opportunities for cross-curriculuar applications and extensions of study. . . . Its many hands-on activities are very appealing and capable of generating a great deal of enthusiasm in the classroom." A reviewer with *Technology Connection* adds that this CD-ROM, with its extensive teacher's guide, may be used for both large, and small-group study as well as with cooperative-learning groups.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, May/June 1998. **Good**—ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1996; *Technology Connection*, December 1997.

My First Amazing History Explorer

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
DK Multimedia

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): K–5

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History
World History
Geography

Cost: $29.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 486/33 MHz, 12MB RAM (16MB for Windows 98), 6MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM; **Macintosh** 7.01 or higher, 68040/25 MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, 13" monitor with 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive exploration program** introduces young students to the wonders of history. Acting as historians and detectives, students travel through eight historical time periods, making stops in locations such as ancient Egypt, Imperial China, Medieval England, the Inca Empire, and a city in the 1920s in an effort to rescue a missing history professor. In all, *My First Amazing History Explorer* highlights important events and civilizations from 1200 B.C. to A.D. 1928. Some of the specific features of this program include Time Detective, in which students identify objects from historical eras as they pass by the monitor; History Maker, which allows students to select pictures and animations to create scenes from specific historical eras; and the Ancient Treasure Challenge, that provides a fun multiple-choice quiz. Other features include a searchable index which allows students to complete research on people, places, and events; a Time Fugitive who acts as a technical helper on the students' travels; and a Time Travel Journal that allows students to collect souvenirs and record their thoughts on their journeys.

Tips: Our evaluators note that younger children (K–1) might need some help with some of the features and contents of the program. Overall, an evaluator with *MultiMedia Schools* calls this program "outstanding" and states that although it will not give students a "systematic knowledge of history, [they] should gain a basic understanding of the periods and the people, some geography, interesting information and a rough idea of the timeline involved." This evaluator also likes this program's use of humor because it made students eager to use the CD-ROM. Binghamton (NY) City School District also praises this program by calling it, a "very versatile program as well as an excellent value."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Binghamton (NY) City School District,1998; *MultiMedia Schools*, January/February 1999. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), April 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the CODIES), 1999.

Native Americans: People of the Plains

(CD-ROM: WIN, MAC)

Publisher:
Rainbow Educational Media

Copyright: 1998

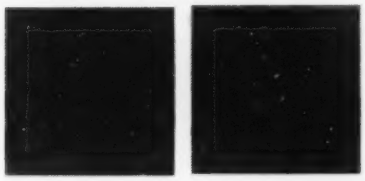
Grade(s): 4–6

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History
Geography

Cost: $99; Lab pack (5) $369; Site license (30) $999

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM (12MB recommended), 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers;
Macintosh System 7.1 or higher, 68040 or faster, 8MB (12MB recommended), 2X CD ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **multimedia reference and activity program** provides a comprehensive look at the 26 tribes that composed the Native Americans of the Plains. The programs uses audio, video, maps, and historical text to introduce students to the various aspects of Native American life. *Native Americans: People of the Plains* is organized into seven different sections: History provides an overview of the Plains Indians from theories regarding the origins of Native Americans to the arrival of the European Americans; Plains World, describes the cultural and societal aspects of the Plains Indians prior to the arrival of European Americans; Museum features artifacts and other items of historical significance; Red Feather discusses how Native American families may have lived during the 1800s; Native Americans Today provides a more recent look at Native Americans; Activities allows students to apply what they have learned in a fun and interactive format; and Reference provides statistics, photos, a reading list, and a glossary with links for audio pronunciation. The contents of this CD-ROM can be searched by words, topics, or even by particular tribes. The teacher's edition contains teaching and learning objectives, lists of student activities, and unit review questions. This CD-ROM is part of a series on Native Americans which includes other titles such as *People of the Desert* and *People of the Northwest Coast* (with more in development).

Tips: A *Library Talk* evaluator writes that "this package would make an outstanding addition to both the classroom and the elementary library. It presents a myriad of curriculum tie-ins and offers a quality presentation of Native American history and present-day culture." Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools reviewers, citing the wealth of primary materials and multimedia approach of this program add that "this is an outstanding CD that provides information not easily found elsewhere."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1999; *Library Talk*, January/February 1999.

The Oregon Trail 3rd Edition: Pioneer Adventures

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History
Geography
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $69.95; Lab pack (5) $158.95; Site License $629.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 90 MHZ or faster, 16MB RAM, 30MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 256 colors, sound card and speakers
Macintosh System 7.5 or later, Power PC or faster, 16MB RAM, 30MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, 13" monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: This **historical simulation and adventure** is the 3rd edition in the best selling *Oregon Trail* series. In this program, students are transported back to 1848, where they must choose a team of homesteaders, buy supplies, and set out on a journey that departs from Independence, Missouri. Using problem-solving and decision-making skills, students guide their wagon train westward towards Oregon City. Along the way, students run into challenges such as dwindling supplies, illness amongst the group, and natural obstacles such as rivers and mountains. As the trip progresses, students can supplement their supplies by hunting, fishing, and gathering plants. Talking to characters they meet and studying the online guidebook helps students to make good decisions. New features to this edition include 360-degree fishing and hunting trips, 3-D river crossing, and enhanced graphics and sound effects.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators call this program "very engaging, educational, and well designed" and add, "kids particularly liked the live actor portrayals of characters, and loved the hunting and gathering expeditions." Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools evaluators were pleased with the extensive supplementary materials, which include scope- and -sequence activities, implications for cooperative learning, classroom management suggestions, and lesson plans with blackline masters. Although all of our evaluators recommended this program, they also advise that Version 1.0 tends to crash a great deal. However, the Learning Company has released Version 1.2, which has corrected the problem.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Lesley College Instructional Computing Department, 1998; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99. **Good**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, March, 1998; *Children's Software Revue*, March/April 1998; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software (the Codies), 1998.

Rand McNally New Millenium World Atlas Education Edition

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Rand McNally

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
Geography
World History
Reference

Cost (School edition): $69.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 100MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 40MB hard drive space, sound card and speakers. Internet features require an Internet browser, modem, and service provider.

Intelligences:

Description: This **multimedia atlas and historical reference program** allows students to explore the world using three dimensional as well as traditional maps. The main screen features two maps—one which shows a world view and one that focuses on a specific area and can be magnified using the zoom feature. Thematic maps include detailed information on social, economic, and environmental topics, and a Compare Facts module contains more than 100 statistical data sets for students to chart. *World Atlas* also contains reference articles and a glossary featuring terms related to history, science, and culture. In addition to using the atlas as a pure reference, students can create and customize their own maps using markers, drawing tools, and notebooks that they can save and use for individual study or for research reports. The program contains an extensive library of resources and also has links to related materials on the Internet (you'll need a browser and Internet service provider to access this section). The printable teacher's guide covers each of the program's 14 features in detail and offers ideas on how the program can best be used for in-class activities and for individual research projects.

Tips: A reviewer with *Technology Connection* recommends this program noting that, "as a resource for geographic information and research and because of the additional features, tools, and map styles, this atlas and gazetter stands out from others as a worthwhile purchase." Our reviewers did warn us, however, that the program tends to run quite slowly on older computers and that only on a 200+ MHz computer did the program run very smoothly.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*MultiMedia Schools*, September/October 1998. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1999; Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1999; *Technology Connection*, May/June 1998.

The Russian Revolution

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Clearvue/eav Inc.

Copyright: 1996

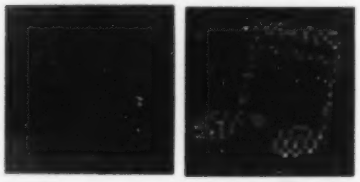
Grade(s): 7–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
World History

Cost: $75; Lab pack (5) $225; Site license (25) $1,125

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386/33MHz or faster, 4MB RAM (8MB recommended), 2X CD-ROM drive, 16 colors (256 recommended), sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" monitor, 256 colors, sound card.

Intelligences:



Description: This **historical exploration program** chronicles the history of Russia from the 18th century to the revolution of 1917 and subsequent rise of communism under Lenin's leadership. The CD-ROM, based on the producer's popular slide show, focuses specifically on the causes, events, and aftermath of the Russian Revolution and contains narration that highlights this historical period in text, sounds, and images. This slide show, which runs about 45 minutes, is broken down into sections, including, Background to Revolution, the Bolsheviks in Power, and the New Russian State. This program also contains a dictionary of terms, geographical data, the complete *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the *American Concise Encyclopedia*, and the *King James Bible*.

Tips: Evaluators with Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools like the Quiz Mode, which allows users to pick the topic, number of questions, and time allotment. Additionally, these evaluators note that in Question Mode, incorrect answers prompt explanations of the materials in question. An evaluator with *History Computer Review* says that the Russian folk music included on the CD-ROM adds "an especially beautiful dimension to the program." This evaluator also notes that "junior and high school students will probably find the overall presentation interesting and college students may wish to critically analyze the text's standard interpretations."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *History Computer Review*, Fall 1998.

SimCity 3000

(CD-ROM: WIN, MAC)

Publisher:
Maxis/Electronic Arts

Copyright: 1998

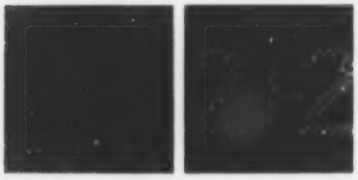
Grade(s): 6–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
Economics
History
Geography

Cost: $49.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 95 or later, 166MHz or faster, 32MB RAM, 230MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM, compatibility with DirectX 6.0; **Macintosh** System7.5.3 or higher, PowerPC 180MHz or faster, 32MB RAM, 128MB virtual memory, 260MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: Students have the opportunity to create a city from scratch in this **high-tech simulation program**. Starting with a large plot of land and a generous budget, students begin to design and build their own metropolis. From the laying of roads and the creation of power plants to the development of skyscrapers and airports, students oversee every detail of the development of their city. Building on the strengths of the other *SimCity* programs, *3000* is much more advanced and allows students to bring existing landmark buildings such as Empire State Building and Big Ben to life in their own cities. Additionally, students can use the *SimCity* Building Architect Tool to design their own buildings and give their cities a unique feel. After creating roads, buildings, and industries, students must maintain and further cultivate their creations by developing a tax base to pay for improvements and developments. Along the way, students will hear from special interest groups (including teacher unions!) and disgruntled citizens who are growing weary of such problems as traffic conditions, crime sprees, and overcrowded neighborhoods. Students who create thriving cities will still have to stay on their toes as natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and tornados threaten to instantly level their creations.

Tips: The *SimCity 3000* Web site notes that a teacher's guide containing lesson plans and discussion questions will be available shortly. Teachers report that this program could be useful in economics or world civilizations classes where students can see if they would fare better in creating a civilization than their historical counterparts. Judges with the Bologna New Media Prize conclude, "all in all, the graphics, sound effects, music, and options make this rendition one of the best simulations we've ever seen." Potential buyers need to note, however, that to support this program's intense graphics and large files, a very fast computer with large memory capacity is necessary (see Hardware Requirements).

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1999; *Children's Software Revue*, March/April 1999.

Xpeditions

(Internet-based service—http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/main.html)

Publisher:
National Geographic

Copyright: N/A

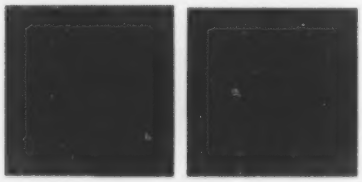
Grade(s): 6–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
Geography
History
Language Arts
Mathematics
Science

Cost: Free

Hardware Requirements:
Users need an Internet connection and browser to view this resource. Higher-end computers will experience faster access and downloads. Although not a requirement, users may wish to download QuickTime to enhance their visit to the site.

Intelligences:



Description: Using the latest in computer technology and graphics, this free **Internet-based exploration program** allows students and teachers to tap into geography resources in new and interesting ways. Developed with the National Geography Standards in mind, this Web site is clustered around the 6 groupings of standards and 18 learning activities. The specific jumping-off points for exploration are the Atlas, which contains more than 600 National Geographic maps that can be printed or saved for later use; Forums, where teachers and students can go to share their research or ask questions of the online community; and Resources and Links, a collection of related Internet sites. The main component of this program is Xpedition Hall, home to virtual tours in which the National Geographic Standards come to life. The hall contains six chambers that are based on each of the groupings of the standards (such as World in Spatial Terms, Places & Regions, and the Uses of Geography). Students can visit each of the chambers and experience short multimedia demonstrations on a variety of geographic topics.

Tips: This resource contains a wealth of graphics and high-end applications. Subsequently, users may experience problems connecting or with download speeds once they have reached the Web site. Another caution in regards to the given technology resources is *Xpedition's* use of QuickTime. Although using QuickTime's Virtual Reality technology may enhance the visual aspect of the students visits to the Web site, it is impossible to use this technology to navigate to the embedded links. As a result, users need to alternate in between the Virtual Reality settings and the regular Internet visual mode. Despite any technical problems that students might experience while visiting this Web site, the content is strong (provided by National Geographic and other noteworthy sources) and the price (free) can't be beat.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Software and Information Industry Association's Excellence in Software Awards (the CODIES), 1999; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998-99.

Inside the SAT & ACT Deluxe

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Princeton Review/Learning Company

Copyright: 1998

Grade(s): 10–12

Subject(s): Student Helper
Reference
Language Arts
Mathematics

Cost: $39.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 16MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 16MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: Using an animated classroom and video tutors as motivators, this **standardized test preparation program** helps high school students to increase their SAT and ACT scores. Students begin by taking practice tests and setting up study plans to focus their efforts. Lessons are then catered to the needs of the individual student and range from the basic (arithmetic and grammar) to the advanced (algebra II and analogies). Throughout the program, Princeton Review experts offer advice ranging from preparation to test-taking strategies. Comprehensive reports detail each students progress and highlight areas that need improvement. The College Counselor Room contains information on more than 1,600 institutions of higher education and also provides leads on scholarship and financial aid packages. This program also contains a 288 page book called *Paying for College*.

Tips: In addition to basic vocabulary and mathematics exercises, *Inside the SAT and ACT Deluxe* helps students identify "testing traps" that could hurt their scores. The program allows students to track their own progress and compare their practice test results to those of the previous year's freshman class. Evaluators with the Florida Department of Education note that this program contains access to Web links that provide further information on standardized testing and the college admissions process.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—EdPress Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1998; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99.

Kid Pix Studio Deluxe

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Broderbund/Learning Company

Copyright: 1998

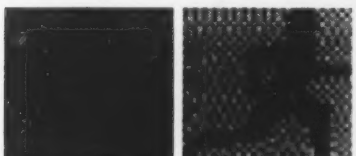
Grade(s): K–6

Subject(s): Student Tools
Arts
Creativity

Cost: $19.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 30MB (35MB for WIN95) hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.01 or later, 68030 or faster, 5MB RAM, 32MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **children's drawing and painting program** provides students with six tools that they can use to make their own artistic creations. Examples of the tools include Kid Pix, the original design program, that sets the stage for children's artwork; Moopies, which allows children to animate their art and create movies; Digital Puppets, which lets children use the keyboard to synchronize objects to music; and Stampinator, which challenges students to edit any of hundreds of stamps and animate them using a mouse. In all, this program features more than 1,200 graphics, the option to add and record sounds, and the ability to import or export pictures (JPEG and GIF) and text. *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe* comes with a user's manual that includes easy-to-follow instructions.

Applications for Diverse Learners: Students with reading difficulties may still fully appreciate *Kid Pix Studio Deluxe* as no reading is necessary to operate the program. Students with limited English proficiency whose native language is Spanish are also well served by the optional Spanish narration.

Tips: Evaluators with *Children's Software Revue* note that kids of all ages love the program and teachers also enjoy it for the professional-looking slide shows that can be created out of a whole classroom's work (something that these evaluators note could be helpful on back-to-school nights). *Library Talk* reviewers add that this program is so versatile that it can be used in many areas of the curriculum. They conclude, "if you have an earlier version, it's time to upgrade. This new version makes the program better than ever."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Library Talk*, January/February 1999; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998–99. **Good**—*Children's Software Revue*, May/June 1998.

Type for Fun!

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Sunburst Communications

Copyright: 1998

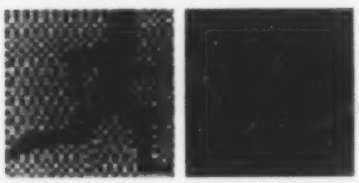
Grade(s): 3–8

Subject(s): Typing
Vocabulary

Cost: $99; Lab packs and site licenses are available. Please contact publisher for most recent pricing information.

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 8MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM;
Macintosh System 7.0 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 8MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: This **keyboarding program** develops typing skills through a variety of interactive adventures. Based on an outer space theme used to motivate and engage learners, *Type for Fun!* offers four specific activities: Galaxy Taxi tests the speed and accuracy of the typists; Zworg Explore lets users visit a fantasy planet and gain rewards if they continually retype words correctly; Space Rocks flashes words across the computer screen and requires students to keep their eyes on the monitor while they are typing; and Power Up! requires students to type quickly and accurately to save the fate of a space town. The ultimate goal of *Type for Fun!* is to get students to type 60 words-per-minute with a 100% accuracy rate. Teachers can customize the program for individual learners by altering difficulty levels and adding challenging vocabulary words. Teachers can also record and store student's individual scores. This program can be used in conjunction with Sunburst's other keyboarding program, *Type to Learn* (for beginning typists).

Tips: A *ConnSENSE Bulletin* evaluator notes the effectiveness of this program, stating that "it really works. The students are not bored with the typing aspect. In fact, you can hear them reading the letters aloud to the beat of the music as they type." This evaluator also likes the program because students can progress at their own individual rate. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction evaluators add that this program will appeal to young people "accustomed to video and computer action-type games, helping them to improve keyboarding skills as they work through the lessons."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*ConnSENSE Bulletin*, May 1999; *Library Talk*, May/June 1999. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, October 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1999.

The entries on the following pages have been deemed *Only the Best* "Classics." These programs have appeared in previous editions of *Only the Best* and are being listed again because they continue to acquire positive reviews from our evaluators.

Only the Best Classics 1999–2000

American Girls Premiere 96
Carmen Sandiego Word Detective 97
Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Nature 98
Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Space and the Universe 99
First Connection: Golden Book Encyclopedia 100
Geometers Sketchpad 101
Kid Phonics 2 102
Landmark Documents in American History 103
Logical Journey of the Zoombonis 104
Math for the Real World 105
My Amazing Human Body 106
Read, Write, and Type 107
Reader Rabbit 3 108
Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores the Inside of the Earth 109
Stanley's Sticker Stories 110
Treasure Math Storm 111

The American Girls Premiere

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 2–6

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History
Language Arts
Writing
Arts

Cost (School Edition): $69.95; Lab pack (5) $157.95; Lab pack (15) $426.95; Site license (25) $629.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/66MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, Windows-compatible sound card and speakers, 256 colors, mouse, printer and microphone (optional); **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68030 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" or larger monitor, 256 colors, printer and microphone (optional).

Intelligences:

Description: The *American Girls Premiere* **writing program** allows children to develop and direct their own plays starring any one of five American Girls characters. The CD-ROM encourages creative expression and develops storytelling and writing skills in an environment modeled after girls' play patterns. The program is based on the heroines of the American Girls collection--Felicity, Kirsten, Addy, Samantha, and Molly--and each character's series of historical fiction books. Historical accuracy provides children with insights into what life was like for girls growing up during five different eras in United States history.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators call the program "compelling, but tricky to use." They recommend that teachers or parents take the time to understand the program first and then be on hand to demonstrate for children. The evaluators also recommend that a microphone be used with this product so that students can record their own dialogue for the play. Binghamton evaluators note that *The American Girls Premiere* characters are realistic appealing miniatures. An evaluator for *Technology Connection* remarks that the CD-ROM is "the way multimedia should be--creative and interactive."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—American Library Association, 1998; Binghamton (NY) City School District, September, 1997; EDPRESS Distinguished Achievement Awards, 1999; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Prince George's County (MD), 1998. **Good**—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; *Children's Software Revue*, November/December 1997; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, October 1997; *History Computer Review*, Fall 1998; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98; *MultiMedia Schools*, November/December 1998; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), May 1998; *Technology Connection*, April 1998.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1998–99

Carmen Sandiego Word Detective

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Broderbund Software Inc.

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): 3–6

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Spelling
Problem Solving
Social Studies
Geography

Cost: $40

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486 or faster, 8MB RAM (16MB RAM with WIN95), 20MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, SVGA monitor, 256 colors; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 20MHz 68040 processor or faster, 20MB hard drive space, 6MB RAM (7MB RAM for Power PC), 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: With this **interactive activity program,** students solve word problems to foil Carmen Sandiego's latest evil plot. Carmen Sandiego has invented the Babble-On Machine, a diabolical device that transforms language into utter nonsense. To restore the power of the written and spoken word to a dozen babbling ACME agents, students must complete 12 missions that require them to solve more than 60 skill-building activities. *Merriam-Webster's Vest Pocket Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass. Merriam-Webster, 1997) is included as a resource. A practice mode features thousands of exercises that develop spelling, grammar, and vocabulary proficiency, along with 18 fact-filled stories that shed light on science, history, geography, and the elusive Carmen Sandiego.

Tips: Lesley College Evaluators note that the puzzles "are all engaging and lots of fun. . . . Three difficulty levels will keep students from becoming bored." The six different types of puzzles are all associated with the language arts and students can learn up to 10,000 new words." *Children's Software Revue* evaluators add, "The mystery-suspense format keeps kids engaged and entertained. Adults will appreciate the fact that it takes at least a half hour of language arts practice to free each agent."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1999; *Children's Software Revue,* January/February 1998; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Lesley College Instructional Computing Department, 1998; *MultiMedia Schools,* September/October 1998; *Technology and Learning* Software Awards, 1998. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, October 1998; *Library Talk,* September/October 1998.

Title originally included in *Only the Best,* 1998–99

Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Nature

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
DK Multimedia

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 3–12

Subject(s): Science
Reference

Cost: $39.95; Lab pack (5) $119.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386/33MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers;
Macintosh System 7.0 or later, 25MHz 68030 processor or faster, 6MB RAM (8 recommended), 2X CD-ROM drive.

Intelligences:

Description: The objective of this **reference/exploration program** is to provide an informative, aesthetically pleasing resource to science students. More than 250 plants and animals are linked together by habitat, climate, and ecology. As with all DK CD-ROM products, there is a wide array of textual information, photographs, narration, and video clips combined to bring information to students with many different learning styles. Students begin at the opening screen and choose from such topics as Prehistoric Life, Microworld, and Climate. In The Green Book, students are introduced to the greenhouse effect, ozone depletion, and saving energy. Material is well organized and students can follow paths set by hypertext or use the index located on the opening screen. They can also click on words displayed in red for explanations and definitions. The program includes a game, Quizmaster, that gives students the opportunity to see how much they have learned from using the encyclopedia.

Tips: The reviewer with *Technology Connection* points out that the program "is not detailed enough for the typical secondary student researcher."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—American Library Association's 1996 "Best" List (*Booklist,* April 1, 1996); Binghamton (NY) City School District, Fall 1996; Florida Department of Education, 1996–97; Jefferson County (CO) School District, 1997–98. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), October 1995.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997

Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Space and the Universe

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN 95 HYBRID)

Publisher:
DK Multimedia

Copyright: 1996

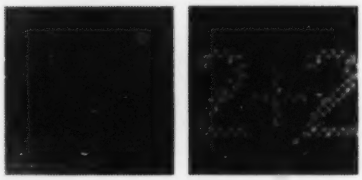
Grade(s): 4–12

Subject(s): Science
Reference
Astronomy
Physics

Cost : $39.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers, 256 colors; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68LC040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors.

Intelligences:



Description: This **reference tool** provides students with an overview of space observation and exploration from ancient times to the present. The program has 10 sections: The Star Dome, The Universe, History of Astronomy, Observations & Telescopes, Space Race, Space Hardware, Who's Who, Cosmology, Technical Manual, and Quiz Master. The text provided on each topic is explained and demonstrated with animated and narrated displays. The program includes photos, videos, and three-dimensional presentations on space phenomena. The Star Dome shows the night sky during any year and for any location selected, offers Web links to astronomy sites, and contains Who's Who biographies of astronomers, scientists, and astronauts.

Tips: Jefferson County (CO) evaluators note that the program is "highly motivating" and a "good simulation of experiences which are otherwise difficult to obtain." They suggest the program for direct, one-on-one, lab, and small group instruction. Evaluators for *Technology Connection* find the program's models of space vehicles "impressive" and note that they can be "rotated by the user and labeled." *Technology Connection* evaluators remark, "If there is one flaw, it may be the 'space music' that accompanies parts of the program. While pleasant, the music might be distracting to others in the room." North Carolina evaluators noted weaknesses: "Using the Star Dome search feature can be frustrating . . . Hints provided are not very helpful." However, they liked the Quiz Master activity and accessibility to 21 Web sites.

Evaluator Conclusions: **Excellent**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, November 1996; California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1999; Florida Department of Education, 1997–98; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1996–97; *Technology Connection*, September 1997. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; Fermilab Lederman Science Center, October 1996; North Carolina Department of Education (*School Library Journal*), September 1996.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1998-99

First Connections: The Golden Book Encyclopedia

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Jostens Learning

Copyright: 1993

Grade(s): K–4

Subject(s): Reference
Social Studies
History
Language Arts

Cost: $79.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 6MB RAM, and CD-ROM drive; **Macintosh** 4MB and CD-ROM drive.

Intelligences:

Description: The objective of this **multimedia encyclopedia** is to provide a research tool for young learners. Features include: 1,500 articles, 2,700 color photos, 200 maps, 100 movies, 500 sound clips, a built-in notebook, and bookmarks for keeping track of information. Students may follow four pathways (e.g., alphabetical list of articles, categorical list, seek-find option, sights and sounds option). To illustrate: In the seek-find option, they choose from nine areas (such as presidents, weather, sports, or dinosaurs) and then answer questions and choose from various articles. In the sights and sounds option, students explore pictures, sounds, speeches, movies, and maps. If they get lost or confused in using a pathway, they can retrace their steps on the tracking system. Text can be printed. Users click on the "Say It" button to have the program read any instructions or text. Copy protected. No teacher management included on disk.

Tips: *Wilson Library Bulletin* states that this product can be used with young learners, older children who have difficulty reading, and ESL students. Several reviewers commented that the words "spoken" by the computer are not clear when students request for the computer to read an article. Teacher materials include sample lesson plans and theme-based activities.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Curriculum Product News, June 1994; Developmental Software Awards, 1997; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1994–95; *Technology & Learning*, November/December 1993. **Good**—ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1996; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1995; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), 1994; Arizona Department of Education, 1993.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1994-95

Geometer's Sketchpad

(DISKETTE: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Key Curriculum Press

Copyright: 1991 (updates yearly)

Grade(s): 8–12

Subject(s): Mathematics
Geometry

Cost (School Edition): $169.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 4MB RAM;
Macintosh System 6.0 or later, 1MB RAM or more.

Intelligences:

Description: The objective of this **mathematical tool program** is to construct, visualize, and manipulate the structure of euclidean, transformational, and fractal geometries in a powerful and dynamic manner. It supports drawing and manipulation of lines and two- and three-dimensional figures. Its measurement functions automatically calculate and display line lengths, area, circumference, and other predefined values. It automatically adjusts all parts of a figure when users make a change in a line, angle, point, or other single component of the figure. A text tool is available to add titles, labels, and annotations.

Tips: A reviewer for *The Mathematics Teacher* describes this program as "well designed, highly functional, and easy to learn. It is useful for helping teachers demonstrate geometric principles dynamically and for helping students to explore informally and intuitively some of those same principles." A high reviewer for *The Computing Teacher* gauges the effect this program could have on classrooms: "It will take years to find out what impact The Geometer's Sketchpad can have on the teaching of geometry. . . . Physically impaired students could be mainstreamed. Middle school students could be better prepared for secondary geometry. Non college-bound students can explore geometry and its beauty without a course focusing only on deductive proofs. College students without a formal course in geometry could study independently."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Alberta (Canada) Curriculum Standards Branch, 1996; Arizona State University, 1992; California Technology Resources in Education, 1992; Learning Exchange, 1992; Software Publishers Association, 1992; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Los Angeles Unified School District, 1991–92. **Good**—ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1994–95; North Carolina Department of Education, 1992; Apple Macintosh Educational Software Guide, 1991; *Technology & Learning*, October 1991.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1993

Kid Phonics 2

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1996

Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Early Childhood

Cost (School Edition): $79.95; Lab pack (5) $189.95; Site license $699.95. A home version is available for $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, SVGA display, sound card; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, Power Macintosh 68040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 5MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 14" or larger color monitor, 256 colors.

Intelligences:

Description: The objective of this **drill program** is to help students build reading skills through phonics and whole language activities. The delightful Sound Buster characters sing, dance, and rhyme their way through games that encourage children to sound out words, connect sounds and letters to form clusters, build clusters into words, and use words in building sentences. Students focus on sounding out words, differentiating among letter sounds, identifying silent letters, forming compound words, and building vocabulary throughout the program's seven activities. In Jailhouse Decoder, students rearrange phonemic fragments to create words. At the Word Rodeo, students form compound words and learn about prefixes and suffixes. Silent Letter Stagecoach focuses on identifying silent letters. In the Dance Hall, each character performs in a music video that reinforces basic rules of English. Lyrics are displayed so that students can sing along. A Control Panel allows teachers and parents to select specific phonic skill areas to focus on for each child. In addition, teachers and parents can receive a Progress Report, showing a child's achievements and completion for each activity. Teacher resource materials include a teacher's guide, student activities, and blackline masters.

Tips: A *Family PC* reviewer says, "Testers felt Phonics 2 was best suited for kids who already have some reading experience, not rank beginners." An evaluator for *Children's Software Revue* adds that "it's definitely most suited for children who need phonics practice--kids who read well will find the program limited." The evaluator concludes, "Educationally, this is a very solid program providing good reinforcement of concepts and entertaining practice skills."

Evaluation Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, October/November 1996; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology Connection*, May/June 1997.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997–98

Landmark Documents in American History

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Facts on File

Copyright: 1995

Grade(s): 5–12

Subject(s): Social Studies
U.S. History
Geography
Problem Solving

Cost: $149.95 if ordered over the phone; $119.95 if ordered on the publisher's Website--
<http://www.fofcat.com/fof/>

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/33MHz or faster, 8MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM;
Macintosh System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8 MB RAM, 10 MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:

Description: The objective of this **multimedia reference program** is to make more than 1,000 full-text sources representing 500 years of America's written history available for exploration and study on a single CD-ROM. Each search result is linked to other information: About This Document (brief information and historical background of the document); Further Readings; Biographical Information (250 biographies); Graphics; 250 black-and-white pictures; and 20 QuickTime movie clips of famous speeches and other moments in American history (QuickTime movies are only available in the Windows version). Primary sources include the Statement of Privileges granted to Christopher Columbus, the Mayflower Compact, *Common Sense*, the U.S. Constitution and Amendments, the Compromise of 1850, and the Declaration of the Rights of Women. Students can examine party platforms, essays, literature, letters, government charters, Supreme Court decisions, presidential inaugural speeches, debates, treaties, and legislation. Navigation buttons are prominent and straightforward. Topics can be searched by title, subject, historical time period or event, year or a range of years, author or speaker, or keyword. Advanced searches allow the use of Boolean operators and queries on multiple fields: keyword, subject, period, date range, people, country, and document type. Multiple search results appear in lists that can be sorted alphabetically by title.

Tips: An evaluator for *Technology Connection* states the real power of this product "...is that it pulls together so much varied primary source material. It could easily be used by students in social studies, American government, and history, and by speech and debate students."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—Curriculum Administrator 1996 Districts' Choice Award; *MultiMedia Schools*, May/June, 1999; *Technology Connection*, May 1996. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), January 1996.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997

Logical Journey of the Zoombinis

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Broderbund Software, Inc.

Copyright: 1996

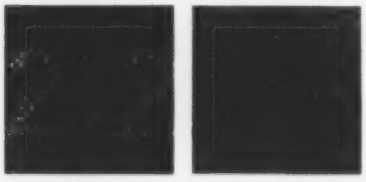
Grade(s): 3–7

Subject(s): Problem Solving
Mathematics
Science

Cost (School Edition): $59.95; Lab pack (5) $179.95; Site license available

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 33MHz 486 or faster, 2MB hard drive space, 8MB RAM, SVGA display, 256 colors, 2X CD-ROM drive, Windows-compatible sound card; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 25MHz 68030 processor or faster, 1MB hard drive space, 8MB RAM, 13" color monitor, 256 colors, 2X CD-ROM drive.

Intelligences:



Description: This **educational game** helps students explore and apply fundamental concepts of logic, problem solving, and data analysis. As they help the Zoombini characters travel to a new homeland, students are presented with 12 engaging puzzles that pose mathematical challenges. To solve each puzzle, students must apply the process of mathematical thinking--organizing information in relevant ways, reasoning about evidence, and testing in a systematic manner. Each puzzle offers four levels of challenge; the difficulty automatically increases as the student masters each level. As students work to solve the puzzles, they get hands-on practice with the concepts of sorting, classifying, graphing, and deductive reasoning. Puzzle solutions regenerate with each play, so students never face the same puzzle twice. The program was developed to be in alignment with National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards and with national science benchmarks and standards. The school edition includes a user's guide, a teacher's guide, and color transparencies. The teacher's guide includes background on the scientific and mathematical concepts involved in the game as well as lesson plans, reproducible student pages, bibliography, and transparencies that illustrate select puzzles from the game and can be used for classroom discussion of problem-solving strategies and mathematical concepts.

Tips: *Technology & Learning* evaluators note that the puzzles can be very challenging for younger students and that the available onscreen help is limited.

Evaluation Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1997; *Children's Software Revue*, April/May 1996; Software Publishers Associations Excellence in Software Awards (the Codies), 1997; Fermilab Lederman Science Center, 1997; Florida Department of Education, 1998; *Technology & Learning* Awards, November/December 1996. **Good**— Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, October 1998.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997–98

Math for the Real World

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
Knowledge Adventure

Copyright: 1997

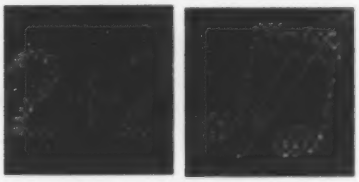
Grade(s): 5–8

Subject(s): Mathematics
Problem Solving

Cost (School Edition): $57; Lab pack (5) $135; Site license (15) $325

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, Windows-compatible sound card, SVGA monitor, 256 colors, mouse; **Macintosh** System 7.1 or later, 68040 or faster, 8MB hard drive space, 12MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors, mouse.

Intelligences:



Description: This **interactive activity program** shows students how mastering math can lead to real-life success. Students hit the road with a hot new band on one of two 10-city tours. They guide the band to succeed and be profitable, on time, well-fed, and headed in the right direction. Students build math skills in areas such as logic, time management, money, percents, and measurement as they help the band climb the charts and earn the chance to produce a multimedia music video. The math difficulty adjusts to students' skill levels throughout the game. A friendly, accessible reference library explains the "how-to's" of every problem. No game is ever the same--more than 4,000 word problems and random events will make students want to play again and again. Six original theme songs let students choose the band's music style.

Tips: According to *Children's Software Revue* evaluators, "Kids generally loved the goofy characters, the road-trip theme, and found the problems to be challenging and fun." These evaluators note, however, that some of their younger testers struggled with a few of the problems. Prince George's evaluators say this program provides "an excellent example of the real-world application of math skills."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, September/October 1997; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1997; *TechTrends*, March 1998. **Good**—Binghamton (NY) City School District, 1997; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1997–98.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1998-99

My Amazing Human Body

(CD-ROM: MAC/WIN HYBRID)

Publisher:
DK Multimedia

Copyright: 1997

Grade(s): K–4

Subject(s): Science
Health
Anatomy
Biology

Cost (School Edition): $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486 or faster, 12MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, Windows-compatible sound card, SVGA monitor, 256 colors, mouse; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68LC040 or faster, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM drive, 256 colors, mouse.

Intelligences:

Description: This **interactive exploration program** allows students to learn about the body from the inside out through interactive games and activities. The program features Seemore Skinless, a mischievous 3-D skeleton who guides students as they learn about human anatomy, health, and nutrition. Students will satisfy their curiosity about what's going on in their own bodies and learn the basics of anatomy through activities like building a body and playing a take-me-apart game. Special features include four learning games; 35 fully controllable 3-D organs and body parts; 3-D effects and animations that bring the body to life; a file that children can personalize with information about themselves; a complete index giving instant access to more than 600 article screens; 35,000 words of text prepared by education experts in a lively and clear style; 10 printable experiment sheets; and a built-in connection to a learning club Web site.

Tips: There is a secret file within *My Amazing Human Body* that allows students to record things about themselves such as favorite food, height, and weight, and things that they have learned through this program. Evaluators list the entertaining activities, excellent graphics, and well-labeled diagrams as reasons to purchase this program. *Children's Software Revue* evaluators state that "both parents and teachers will appreciate the program's design, which encourages kids to look up topics in an extensive information section."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—American Library Association's "Best" List, 1998; Binghamton (NY) City School District, November 1997; California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1998; *Children's Software Revue*, March/April 1998; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1998.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1998–99

Read, Write & Type!

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1995

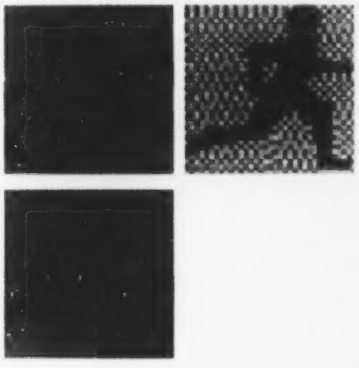
Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Typing
Tools

Cost: $29.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/25 MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 1.4 hard drive space, 256 color SVGA monitor, 2X CD-ROM drive, sound card, mouse, printer; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM, 2MB hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM drive, 13" or larger color monitor, 256 colors, 8-bit display card, mouse, printer.

Intelligences:



Description: The objective of this **tool/simulated game program** is to introduce young students to phonics, reading, writing, and keyboard skills. This program encourages students to write what they feel like writing. Students link 40 sounds to the letters on a talking keyboard. When they are proficient in the linkage, they begin to build a personal vocabulary that can reach as many as 5,000 words. Students progress through all 40 lessons and play 4–8 games at each level as they become expert typists, better readers, and writers. To attract and keep young students' attention, the program is built around a theme involving Vexor, a virus who tries to keep them from writing their stories. The students are assisted by talking hands, Lefty and Rightway, and by 26 storytellers who live in keyboard houses. These characters offer hints so the students can outwit Vexor and write their stories. A simulated program introduces students to e-mail.

Tips: A reviewer with *Technology & Learning* wrote, "This novel program is well - designed for independent classroom use, although teachers may need to monitor correct finger placement when children get caught up in games. Also, the word processing function is not available until 12 letter sounds have been introduced, which means beginning users can't practice newly learned skills. Nonetheless, the clever animations, engaging games, and well-defined, clear, achievable goals and rewards will keep kids coming back for more."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—California Instructional Technology Clearinghouse, 1997; *Children's Software Revue*, October/November 1995; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; ISTE Educational Software Consortium, 1997; *MultiMedia Schools*, November/December 1996; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology Connection*, December 1996.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997

Reader Rabbit 3

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1993; 1995

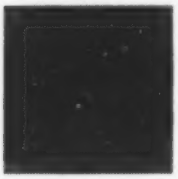
Grade(s): 2–3

Subject(s): Language Arts
Reading
Phonics

Cost: $14.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 386/33 MHz or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM, sound card and speakers; **Macintosh** System 7.0 or later, 68030 or faster, 4MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM.

Intelligences:



Description: The objective of this **drill and practice program** is to help children build reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills. As a follow-up to Reader Rabbit 1 and 2 (both *Only the Best* entries), this volume casts students in the role of an investigative reporter. They work with 200 paragraph-length stories, all tailored to increase in difficulty with each player's skill level. Four activities are available: What's the Scoop? (figuring out who, what, where, when, and how); Clue Hounds picking out grammatical components of sentences; Sneak Peak (putting sentence parts into proper order); and Ed Words (editing). To maintain student interest, the program also features animated cartoons and numerous indoor and outdoor scenes. Completed stories can be printed. Copy protected.

Tips: Evaluators for *Children's Software Revue* say this program effectively presents sentence structure concepts. They consider it "ideal for grade 2 or 3 and fun enough for home use." A reviewer for *Booklist* calls it "an excellent way to develop reading ability and logical writing style" because children "progress at their own pace, building upon the skills they acquire." A good use of the program, according to North Carolina evaluators, is to complement classroom newspaper production and the reading and discussion of students' own writing.

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, December 1993; Florida Department of Education, 1994; High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1994–95; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1995–96; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998. **Good**—North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1994; *Technology & Learning*, November/December 1994.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1996

Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores Inside the Earth

(CD-ROM: WIN)

Publisher:
Microsoft Corporation

Copyright: 1996

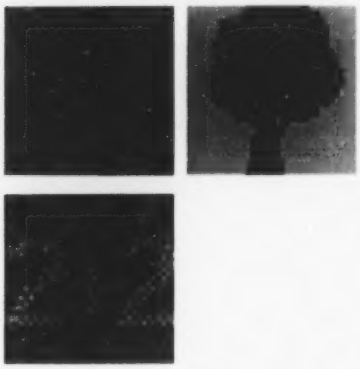
Grade(s): 1–5

Subject(s): Science
Geology

Cost: $19.95

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486/25MHz or faster, 5MB hard drive space, 4MB RAM, SVGA display, 256 colors, 2X CD-ROM drive, sound card and speakers, mouse.

Intelligences:



Description: This **science-based activity program** is one in a series of adventures that students share with wacky teacher Ms. Frizzle and her class. Like other titles in this series, students control the pace of the adventure and choose activities to pursue along the way. Students visit six geological zones: a canyon, an underwater volcano, a giant fault, a cavern, a land volcano, and the inside of a forming crystal. In each geological zone, students see a multimedia report that includes videos, drawings, and important geologic concepts. One report shows how rivers, glaciers, and weather shape the Earth through erosion. Other reports address fossil formation, famous volcanoes, and tsunami and earthquake damage. The program includes eight arcade–style games that reinforce science concepts and encourage students to explore each zone further. The program also includes four experiments. In one experiment, students can manipulate environmental conditions and witness the results. At the Geo Table, students examine samples to classify them as rock or mineral and as igneous, metamorphic, or sedimentary, and then they perform tests on each sample. In the kitchen, students can make certain rocks and minerals by combining the right minerals with heat. Ms. Frizzle and Liz the Lizard provide advice and tips throughout the adventure. Once students complete the program's activities, they earn a printable "Rock Hound" certificate. A teacher's activity guide introduces the program and offers 20 student activities.

Tips: *Children's Software Revue* evaluators call this "a jam-packed program with lots of strong content and activities. Tricky to get started . . . but fun once you're under way." The evaluators noted that younger students will definitely need help getting started.

Evaluation Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, August/September 1996; Florida Department of Education, 1997–98; Prince George's (MD) County, 1998; *Technology Connection*, April 1997.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997-98

Stanley's Sticker Stories

(CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Edmark Corp.

Copyright: 1996

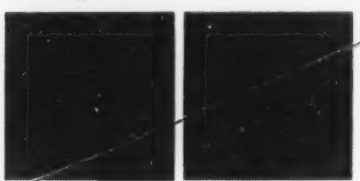
Grade(s): PreK–2

Subject(s): Early Childhood
Language Arts
Reading
Writing
Tools

Cost: $59.95; Lab pack (5) $159.95; site license $599.99

Hardware Requirements:
Windows 3.1 or later, 486 or faster, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard drive space, SVGA color monitor, 2X CD-ROM, sound card; **Macintosh** 68030 or faster, System 7.0 or later, 8MB RAM, 4MBhard drive space, 13" color monitor, 256 colors, 2X CD-ROM drive.

Intelligences:



Description: The objective of this **creative activity/tool program** is to introduce children to storytelling and story writing, thereby strengthening reading and writing skills, increasing vocabulary, improving spelling, and building creativity. Play begins when children are introduced to Stanley, an otter who explains what each creativity tool does, shows a sample story, and demonstrates how to create an animated storybook from scratch. Children choose from more than 325 stickers of characters and objects, which are animated with the click of a button, and from 30 background scenes. Then they begin to compose the stories, record sounds, and write words and sentences. Stickers automatically get larger as they are dragged to the front of the screen and shrink as they are moved to the background. Although children can insert text of various fonts and colors into each story, a valuable feature of this program is the ability to add narration (if your computer has a microphone). Children simply click on a "record" button and begin speaking or making sound effects, thus adding to sound and music options already available. A sticker-spelling book allows children to see and hear the spelling of the words on the stickers. The school edition of this program includes a teacher's guide with lesson ideas.

Tips: Reviewers for *Children's Software Revue* say that "even with all this on-screen help, adults should plan to spend some lap time with youngsters to get them started." They suggest that "three- to five-year-olds will need a lot of assistance, and six and seven-year-olds will be fine once they have a story or two under their belts."

Evaluation Conclusions: Excellent—Bologna New Media Prize, 1997; *Children's Software Revue*, August/September 1996; Developmental Software Awards, 1996; Florida Department of Education, 1998–99; *Technology Connection*, September 1997. **Good**—Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1998; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1999; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (*School Library Journal*), March 1997.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1997–98

Treasure MathStorm!

(DISKETTE: MAC/WIN CD-ROM: MAC, WIN)

Publisher:
Learning Company

Copyright: 1994

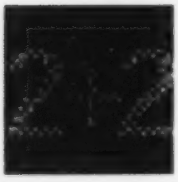
Grade(s): 1–3

Subject(s): Mathematics
Early Childhood

Cost (School Edition): $49.95; $69.95 for CD version; Lab pack (5) $119 for disk version; $149 for CD-ROM

Hardware Requirements:
Product available in diskette and CD-ROM format. Please contact publisher for more information.

Intelligences:



Description: The objective of this **educational game program** is to build skills in math, time–measurement, and money counting. Part of a series featuring the Master of Mischief, this seven-part program lets students answer math riddles, catch elves, and avoid snowbullies. The program teaches real-life skills such as relating digital and analog clocks to the time that they represent. Students begin by telling the time and move on to use the concepts of "later" and "earlier." They also learn the meaning of "greater than," "less than," and "equal to," as they move weights. In another part of the program, students learn counting and place–order relationships by counting objects on the monitor screen. As their skills increase, the problems get harder. The program has built-in hints to provide extra assistance as needed. Automatic leveling allows the program to adjust the challenge level according to the student's performance. Students earn animated prizes for their performance.

Tips: Evaluators for Jefferson County schools say this program "will help reinforce basic math concepts in a very engaging way." *Technology & Learning* evaluators say the program "presents material that teachers know kids need to learn in the context of a game that those same-aged kids will love." Evaluators for *MacUser* say this is "one of the best integrations of game play and math drill."

Evaluator Conclusions: Excellent—*Children's Software Revue*, April/May 1997; High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1994–95; Jefferson County (CO) Public Schools, 1994/95. **Good**—Baltimore County (MD) Public Schools, 1996; Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, 1995; ISTE Educational Software Evaluation Consortium, 1994–95; Prince George's County (MD) Public Schools, 1998; *Technology & Learning*, November/December 1993.

Title originally included in *Only the Best*, 1996

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Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-8036
800-338-4204
715-424-3636
Fax: 715-424-4242
http://www.advlearn.com

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Sunnyvale, CA 94089
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http://www.cccnet.com

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http://www.curriculumassociates.com

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847-516-8280
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Great Wave Software
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Scotts Valley, CA 95066
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Fax: 408-438-7171
http://www.greatwave.com

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Danbury, CT 06816
203-797-3530
Fax: 203-797-3130
http://www.grolier.com

Gryphon Software Corporation
7220 Trade Street, Suite 120
San Diego, CA 92121-2325
619-536-8815
Fax: 619-536-8932
http://www.gryphonsw.com

Harmonic Vision
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Evanston, IL 60201
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Houghton Mifflin Interactive Corporation
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Somerville, MA 02143
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Fax: 617-503-4900
http://www.hminet.com

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Suite B101, Box 180
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800-499-8386
425-867-2596
Fax: 425-489-3446
http://www.humongous.com

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Cambridge, MA 02142
617-494-1200
617-494-5700 Customer Service
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Galesburg, MI 49053-9687
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P.O. Box 158427
Nashville, TN 37215-8427
800-974-2248
Fax: 615-385-9496
http://www.littleplanet.com

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San Rafael, CA 94912
http://www.lucaslearning.com

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800-201-7103
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http://www.k12online.com

Rainbow Educational Media
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800-331-4047
Fax: 919-954-7554
http://www.rainbowedumedia.com

REMedia
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Poway, CA 92064
800-5-REMEDIA
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RES Software, LLC
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Route 10
Denville, NY 07834
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Fax: 973-328-2893
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(See Knowledge Adventure)

SkillsBank Corporation
(See also The Learning Company)
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Baltimore, MD 21244
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800-725-8432 Technical Support
Fax: 410-265-8874
http://www.learningcompanyschool.com

Sunburst Communications, Inc.
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Interdisciplinary

Program	*Page*	Arts	Early Childhood	Diverse Learners	Health	History	Language Arts	Math
Adventures of Batman and Robin	48							x
American History Inspirer: Civil War	75					x		
Animals in Danger	56							
Ask Asia	76					x		
Astro Algebra (Mighty Math)	33							x
Author's Toolkit	10						x	
Better Photography	1	x						
Big Thinkers First Grade	40		x				x	x
Big Thinkers Kindergarten	4		x				x	x
Carmen Sandiego Math Detective	28							x
CCCNet	49						x	x
Children's Atlas of the United States	77					x	x	
Civil War: American History Inspirer	75					x		
Clue Finders 3rd Grade Adventures	41						x	x
Cold War	78					x		
Community Construction Kit	79					x		
Complete National Geographic	51						x	
CornerStone Language Arts Series	11						x	
Crayola Make A Masterpiece	2	x		x				
Curious Creatures	12			x			x	
Curious George Learns to Spell	13						x	
Dr Seuss Kindergarten Deluxe	5		x				x	x
Earobics Pro Plus: Step 1	14						x	
Earth Explorer	57							
Earth Quest (Eyewitness Virtual Reality)	58							

Index

Music	Problem Solving	Reading	Reference	Science	Social Studies	Tools	Writing
	x						
	x				x		
	x			x			
			x		x		
							x
						x	
		x		x			
x							
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		x		x			
		x					
		x					
		x					
				x			
				x			

Program	*Page*	Arts	Early Childhood	Diverse Learners	Health	History	Language Arts	Math
Encarta Africana	52			x			x	
Encarta Reference Suite 1999	53	x		x			x	x
Encarta Virtual Globe	80					x		
Encyclopedia Britannica on CD-ROM	54						x	x
Exploring Numbers (Odyssey of Discovery)	35							x
Eyewitness Virtual Reality: Earth Quest	58							
Facts on File	81					x		
Field Trip to the Rainforest Deluxe	59							
Fizz and Martina's Math Adventure: Blue Falls Elementary	29			x				x
Fraction Attraction	30							x
French for the Real World	8						x	
Funny Monsters for Tea	15						x	x
Glowbird Collection, The	16						x	
Grammar for the Real World	17						x	
Great Solar System Rescue CD-ROM	60							x
Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia	55					x		x
His Name Was Lincoln	82					x		
Hot Dog Stand: The Works	31							x
How Many Bugs in a Box?	6		x	x				x
I Spy	18						x	
Inside the SAT & ACT Deluxe	91						x	x
JumpStart 2nd Grade	42						x	x
JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade: Mission Earth Quest	61						x	x
JumpStart Kindergarten	43						x	x

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Music	Problem Solving	Reading	Reference	Science	Social Studies	Tools	Writing
			x		x		
			x	x	x		
			x		x		
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	x	x					x
			x			x	
x		x					
				x	x		
		x					

Program	*Page*	Arts	Early Childhood	Diverse Learners	Health	History	Language Arts	Math
JumpStart Math for Kindergartners	32							x
Kid Pix Studio Deluxe	92	x						
Lego Mindstorms	62							x
Let's Go Read! An Island Adventure	19		x	x			x	
Life Begins	9				x			
Madeline Classroom Companion: 1st and 2nd Grade Reading Deluxe	20						x	
Making Music	46			x				
Meiko: A Story of Japanese Culture	83			x		x	x	
Mighty Math: Astro Algebra	33							x
Mirror Symmetry (Tenth Planet)	37	x					x	x
Mission Earth Quest (JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade)	61						x	x
Music Ace	47							
My First Amazing History Explorer	84					x		
My Personal Tutor: Preschool-Grade 1	44						x	x
Mystery Math Island	34							x
Native Americans: People of the Plains	85					x		
Nine Worlds	63							
Odyssey of Discovery: Exploring Numbers 1.0	35							x
Orcas In Our Midst	64							
Oregon Trail 3rd Edition: Pioneer Adventures	86					x		
People of the Plains (Native Americans)	85					x		
PhysicalElementa: The World of Physics	65							

Music	Problem Solving	Reading	Reference	Science	Social Studies	Tools	Writing
	x						
						x	
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	x				x		
					x		
	x			x			

Program	*Page*	Arts	Early Childhood	Diverse Learners	Health	History	Language Arts	Math
Pinball Science (The Way Things Work)	74							
Pioneer Adventures (The Oregon Trail)	86					x		
PrimeTime Math: Fire!	36							x
Rainforest Explorer	66							
Rand McNally New Millennium World Atlas Education Edition	87					x		
Reader Rabbit's 1st Grade	45						x	x
Reader Rabbit's Kindergarten	7		x				x	x
Reading Mansion	21						x	
Reading Who? Reading You!	22						x	
RedShift 3	67							
Russian Revolution	88					x		
Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores the Rainforest	68			x				
Science Court: Water Cycle	69							
Shapes within Shapes (Tenth Planet)	38	x					x	x
SimCity 3000	89							
Simon Sounds it Out	23			x			x	
Spell It Deluxe	24						x	
STAR READING A Computer-Adaptive Reading Test	25			x			x	
Star Wars DroidWorks	70							
Stars and Stories	71							x
Tenth Planet Explores Math: Mirror Symmetry	37	x					x	x
Tenth Planet Explores Math: Shapes within Shapes	38	x		x			x	x
That's a Fact Jack	26						x	

Music	Problem Solving	Reading	Reference	Science	Social Studies	Tools	Writing
				x			
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					x		
		x			x		x

Program	*Page*	Arts	Early Childhood	Diverse Learners	Health	History	Language Arts	Math
Thinkin' Science	72							
Thinkin' Science Series--Zap!	73							
Thinkin' Things Sky Island Mysteries	50						x	
Type for Fun!	93							
Understanding Exposure and Learning to See Creatively (Better Photography)	1	x						
Water Cycle (Science Court)	69							
Way Things Work: Pinball Science	74							
Windows on Math: Volume 1	39			x				x
With Open Eyes	3	x						
World of Words	27			x			x	
Xpeditions	90					x	x	x

Music	Problem Solving	Reading	Reference	Science	Social Studies	Tools	Writing
	x			x			
x	x			x			
	x			x			
						x	
						x	
				x			
				x			
	x						
				x	x		

Index of *Only the Best* Entries 1999-2000

Adventures of Batman and Robin Activity Center 48
American Girls Premiere, The* 96
American History Inspirer: The Civil War 75
Animals in Danger 56
Ask Asia 76
Astro Algebra (Mighty Math) 33
Author's Toolkit 10
Better Photography: Understanding Exposure and Learning to See Creatively 1
Big Thinkers First Grade 40
Big Thinkers Kindergarten 4
Carmen Sandiego Math Detective 28
Carmen Sandiego Word Detective* 97
CCCNet 49
Children's Atlas of the United States 77
Civil War, The (American History Inspirer) 75
Clue Finders 3rd Grade Adventures, The 41
Cold War 78
Community Construction Kit 79
Complete National Geographic, The 51
CornerStone Language Arts Series 11
Crayola Make a Masterpiece 2
Curious Creatures 12
Curious George Learns to Spell 13
Dr. Seuss Kindergarten Deluxe 5
Earobics Pro Plus, Step 1 14
Earth Explorer 57
Earth Quest (Eyewitness Virtual Reality) 58
Encarta Africana 52
Encarta Reference Suite 1999 53
Encarta Virtual Globe 80
Encyclopaedia Britannica on CD-ROM 54
Exploring Numbers (Odyssey of Discovery) 35
Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Nature* 98
Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Space and the Universe* 99
Eyewitness Virtual Reality: Earth Quest 58
Facts on File 81
Field Trip to the Rainforest Deluxe, A 59
First Connections: The Golden Book Encyclopedia* 100
Fizz and Martina's Math Adventure Blue Falls Elementary 29
Fraction Attraction 30
French for the Real World 8
Funny Monsters for Tea 15

Geometer's Sketchpad* 101
Glowbird Collection, The 16
Golden Book Encyclopedia, The (First Connections)* 100
Grammar for the Real World 17
Great Solar System Rescue, The 60
Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia 55
His Name Was Lincoln 82
Hot Dog Stand: The Works 31
How Many Bugs in a Box? 6
I Spy 18
Inside the SAT & ACT Deluxe 91
JumpStart 2nd Grade 42
JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade: Mission Earth Quest 61
JumpStart Kindergarten 43
JumpStart Math for Kindergartners 32
Kid Phonics 2* 102
Kid Pix Studio Deluxe 92
Landmark Documents in American History* 103
Lego Mindstorms 62
Let's Go Read! An Island Adventure 19
Life Begins 9
Logical Journey of the Zoombinis* 104
Madeline Classroom Companion: 1st and 2nd Grade Reading Deluxe 20
Making Music 46
Math for the Real World* 105
Meiko: A Story of Japanese Culture 83
Mighty Math: Astro Algebra 33
Mirror Symmetry (Tenth Planet Explores Math) 37
Mission Earth Quest (JumpStart Adventures 6th Grade) 61
Music Ace 47
My Amazing Human Body* 106
My First Amazing History Explorer 84
My Personal Tutor: Preschool-Grade 1 44
Mystery Math Island 34
Native Americans: People of the Plains 85
Nine Worlds 63
Odyssey of Discovery: Exploring Numbers 1.0, An 35
Orcas in Our Midst 64
Oregon Trail 3rd Edition: Pioneer Adventures, The 86
People of the Plains (Native Americans) 85
PhysicalElementa: The World of Physics 65
Pinball Science (The Way Things Work) 74
Pioneer Adventures (The Oregon Trail) 86
PrimeTime Math: Fire! 36

Rainforest Explorer 66
Rand McNally New Millennium World Atlas Education Edition 87
Read, Write & Type!* 107
Reader Rabbit 3* 108
Reader Rabbit's 1st Grade 45
Reader Rabbit's Kindergarten 7
Reading Mansion 21
Reading Who? Reading You! 22
RedShift 3 67
Russian Revolution, The 88
Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores Inside the Earth* 109
Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Explores the Rainforest 68
Science Court: Water Cycle 69
Shapes within Shapes (Tenth Planet Explores Math) 38
SimCity 3000 89
Simon Sounds it Out 23
Spell It Deluxe 24
Stanley's Sticker Stories* 110
STAR READING, A Computer-Adaptive Reading Test 25
Star Wars DroidWorks 70
Stars and Stories 71
Tenth Planet Explores Math: Mirror Symmetry 37
Tenth Planet Explores Math: Shapes within Shapes 38
That's a Fact, Jack! 26
Thinkin' Science 72
Thinkin' Science Series--Zap! 73
Thinkin' Things Sky Island Mysteries 49
Treasure MathStorm!* 111
Type for Fun! 93
Understanding Exposure and Learning to See Creatively (Better Photography) 1
Water Cycle (Science Court) 69
Way Things Work: Pinball Science, The 74
Windows on Math: Volume 1 39
With Open Eyes 3
World of Words 27
Xpeditions 90

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Founded in 1943, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, education association, with international headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. ASCD's mission statement: *ASCD, a diverse, international community of educators, forging covenants in teaching and learning for the success of all learners.*

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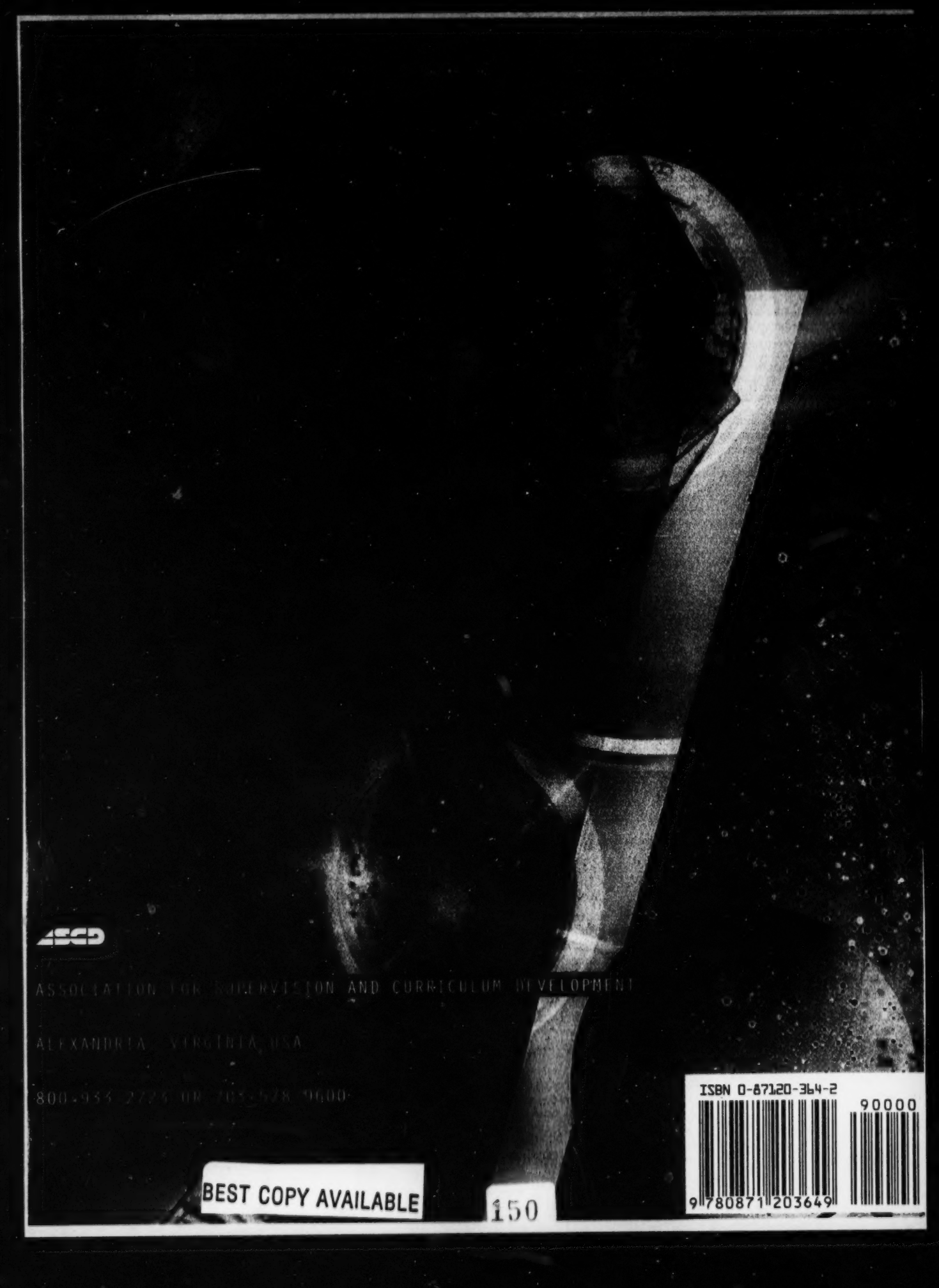

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